

*Continent
in Limbo*


Continent in Limbo

By Edith Sulkin

Reynal & Hitchcock, New York

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To Those I Could Not Find

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Eastward Crossing

SHE WAS NOT YET converted but this time her passengers were not in uniform. This was the mighty but tired *Queen Elizabeth's* first and last trip between war and peace. It was January, 1946.

As she moved slowly down the Hudson carrying her first load of civilians over to England, her hull wore the flat gray coat of war, her decks were clean scrubbed but bleak, and the odor of disinfectant hung about her. For ornaments she had only the countless initials of thousands of GI's carved and scratched on the railings, walls, floors and even the few hard-backed deck chairs

The deck was crowded but strangely quiet. There was none of the careless excitement which usually marks the beginning of a transatlantic crossing. People stood about in small groups or walked the deck alone. The talk was subdued. Some men and women wore UNRRA or Red Cross uniforms. Of the private citizens, many were American businessmen, looking toward an age of postwar prosperity they could be heard talking loudly about deals they had made or were about to make and complaining more than most about the overcrowded cabins. A few government employees walked about carrying diplomatic secrets on their faces. The rest were people homeward bound, refugees who had spent the war in exile. I heard them talking softly in their native French, Italian, Czech or Polish.

Life on board quickly settled down to its routine. We queued

up at the PX commissaries in the lobby for cigarettes and soap, and ate our meager dinners in what had been the Officers' Mess. There was no bar, no music. In the evenings, I often sat with a group that talked passionately and continuously of Europe's political problems. One of them, the British historian, John Wheeler-Bennett, was on his way home after having completed his war duties as chief of the British Information Service in the United States. As I talked to him and his American companions, it struck me that they were more interested in recalling the old days of crisis than in thinking about the present. They exchanged nostalgic reminiscences of their experiences in Berlin and Munich where they had watched the advent of Nazism. They laughed over the stories about Goebbels and Goering which they had no doubt told and retold a hundred times in their careers. When they discussed the Nuremberg trials and other current events I couldn't help feeling that they looked back with a sense of loss. For they had spent their lives amassing information about and interpreting that old world. It had been so much a part of them that they had hardly bothered to wonder what would take its place once it was dead.

The majority of the passengers, however, were deeply concerned with what it would be like in Europe. These were the exiles returning after many years. Many had made homes, though temporary ones, in New York, Chicago or Washington. They had acquired American dress habits; they ate holding their forks in their right hands, resting their knives across the plates. Their children read comic strips and were far more interested in baseball and Dick Tracy than Joan of Arc or the Royal Family of the Netherlands. Nevertheless they were Europeans and they were going back to where their roots were.

I felt a close affinity with them. For I was going back too. I was a mixture of a homeward-bound refugee and an American going to Europe on private business. I was going back to the continent on which I had been brought up, whose countries,

languages and people I had known well in peace and crisis and which, like so many of my fellow passengers now, I had left for the security of America on the eve of war. Yet, unlike most of them, I could not point to a single country on the continent and say that this was where I came from. It was Europe itself that had been my childhood and early adolescence. I had been born in Russia, but before I was old enough to call it home I was on the move. I had gone to twelve schools in five different countries. Warsaw had been home for a while, Prague, Berlin, London. Now I would see these cities again, learn what had happened to the people I had known, discover what Europeans were thinking, doing, planning for.

On the last day of the crossing I stood at the railing with a group of Europeans looking toward England. I felt as nervous as they did and wondered why. Perhaps it was because I knew that Europe would be completely changed. And yet what did that matter? We had always said that it needed a change. Perhaps it was only sentimentality, or the knowledge that I would meet people I had known, or the fear that I would find nothing I recognized.

And There the Weary

ENGLAND

THE BELGRAVE CHAMBERS at 17 Hedford Place, London SW1, was meant to be a hotel. So the sign over the door declared. From the outside it was difficult to believe that this was possible Hedford Place was a cat's alley, squeezed between Belgrave Square and Grosvenor Place. Except for two other decrepit-looking houses and what appeared to be a garage, nothing else stood there but a row of high wooden planks.

But Mr. Broom was immensely pleased with the location, the sign, the name he had chosen, and the interior of his hotel. As he conducted me to my room up a flight of creaking stairs and through a long moist-smelling corridor, he explained his circumstances in studied English which concealed a cockney accent. "You're one of the first guests, miss. We just got it back from the forces First your Americans had it for WAC officers, then the WAAF moved in. It's one of the first requisitioned 'otels to be reconverted in London," he said proudly.

To my surprise the room he showed me was large and clean. He moved across it to the bathroom "Here, not worse than in America, is it?" I followed him into a green-tiled room with a Kohler and Kohler-type stall shower and sink "We had it all

installed when the army was here," he continued. "There aren't many of these in London, you know."

The grass green of the walls matched Mr. Broom's shirt and the light from the uncovered bulb reflected on the pearl pin stuck in his pink checkered tie, on his stiff white collar and shiny red cheeks. "Not many English people ever saw such bathrooms. Of course it's nothing new to me. I know your country very well, very well indeed" I wondered whether his barely lisped r's were natural or acquired, like the pearl pin and diamond ring on his little finger, to give him dignity. "Those were the days Mrs Broom and I used to go to Florida in November and return to England in May. For twelve years we did that. No place in the world like Florida."

"What did you do in Florida?"

"Rest" He chewed reminiscently on his wet cigar stub. "English pounds went far in those days even in America—if you had enough of them Mrs. Broom would go down to Lincoln Road just before we left Florida and buy her wardrobe She was the best-dressed lady around here. Yes, six months' work and six months in Florida for twelve years. Of course in 1938 it was much dearer and we couldn't do much. But I managed to get myself a Cadillac and go to the races" He shook his head. "I guess we'll have to wait a bit longer before we can do it again. The Socialist government won't let us use our pounds now. They won't even let me bring my Cadillac to England unless I pay them in dollars over there and get refunded in pounds here They make everything so complicated, really. You can't do things legitimately these days Do you think I could've opened the Chambers if I had to do it all the way the government wanted it? Why, I wouldn't have had the place painted or repaired or even swept properly. There are so many little things one has to get for a hotel Like sheets and pillow cases and curtains I went down to Birmingham and got some Air Force blue muslin Mrs Broom is bleaching it and we'll cut it up for

sheets The guests will have to provide their own towels. And a man in Leeds has promised me some stuff for curtains But it all costs money and you've got to know the right man in the right place" He winked "You know about pull in America I'm cheerful, though The Chambers will be all right All this Socialist business can't last long, not in England."

Mr. Broom's prize bathroom was very cold. I was glad when he switched off the light and we stepped back into the room. "I guess you'll want to unpack now. There's only one hanger in the wardrobe and you probably have several frocks" He eyed my two bags. "You'll have to manage" He walked out, leaving behind a faint smell of hair pomade

At first there were the obvious things the drizzle, the cold room, the starchy food, the big overcrowded buses, shabby clothes, telephones that didn't work, bombed-out lots that looked like real estate property held for speculation, the devastated East End, the crowds in the Lyons Corner Houses, queues for food, queues for the cinema, the concert halls, the buses, the taxis All the details and generalities that get into correspondents' dispatches London is cold, London is hungry, London is hopeless

But London for me was more than this. It was a place I knew well. It was a city with which I had had my own private battle. I had come here a lonely foreigner to attend Queens College. For months I had lived at a Russian boarding house in Finchley, listening to the interminable talk of the proprietor, Mr Pavlov, about the October Revolution. I had walked for hours in Hyde Park, not because I wanted to, but because there was nothing else to do I had felt outside of everything and hated the aloofness of the Londoners At school I wore a green blazer and ate watercress sandwiches, but neither had seemed to bring me any closer to the English. I walked among the bookstores on Charing Cross Road and sat in Mr. Pavlov's garden on Sundays wonder-

ing what it was like to be English with a little house and garden and a father who wore tweeds and said little while he ate his mixed grill

Gradually, however—I never knew how it happened—I also ate a big breakfast, read the *Times* in silence, and learned that there was something warmer behind the dry jokes and “Good morning” of the neighbors. The *chai* woman, Anne, who came from Camden Town and didn’t say much at first, was warm and alive one morning when I was ill. The lonely week ends disappeared. I went into the houses and found that inside the narrow suits and behind the pale eyes there was laughter and interest. The city grew friendlier. The ugly dark streets and the massive buildings which I had hated bitterly, at last gave me a feeling of solidity. And so did the people.

I made friends. One of the first was Helen Turner. There was nothing special about Helen. She came from a family that one forgot as easily as the pattern on the living room wallpaper. There was no special reason for our friendship except a mutual curiosity. I was foreign and to her, at seventeen, interesting—perhaps even exotic. She, in turn, personified the calmness, the balanced opinion, the strong sense of belonging which came with the brick house, the fire, the tweeds. There was no nationalistic fervor in her patriotism, as there had been in so many of my girlhood friends in Central or Eastern Europe. There was never any discussion of the glory of the country or its power. It was a simple attachment to a place whose roots went deep, a native fondness for the grass, the fog, the life in which nothing startling ever happened. There was a sense of permanence about her.

Helen was Mrs. James Collins now. She lived in a four-room flat in St. John’s Wood. Her husband was the son of a lawyer outside of London, and if it hadn’t been for the war he would be taking over his father’s practice now. But four years in the Middle Eastern Command had changed his plans. “There isn’t

much point in starting all over again, standing for bar exams and then settling down in the country—not nowadays,” he explained. He had a job in London with the legal division of one of the ministries and Helen said they were getting along.

“I suppose you’ll find it strange, as most of our friends do,” Helen said at dinner. “Why live in London when we could settle down much more cheaply and with greater security in Oxon?” For the first time I noticed what had changed in Helen. Her voice was sharper and her hands veiny.

“I couldn’t care less about the future or security,” Jim interrupted with a laugh. “Helen has had enough of the country for a while, I guess. She was there all during the war. And I have no patience with the difficulties out there.”

Helen passed around a plate of boiled fish cakes. “I certainly would have to grumble more there than I do in London,” she said.

I smiled. “I had always thought that you’d feel out of place in a flat. You said you could never understand people who lived in them.”

“I suppose that’s the changing England that everyone is talking about.” Jim rose and began rummaging in a cabinet. “Here’s a treat.” He brought forth a small bottle. “Cherry brandy. A chap from Denmark brought it. It’s a bit sweet.” He spoke and moved in jerky stanzas. He was tall and slightly stooped. One cheek was scarred. I wondered whether it had always been that way.

It was not until later, when we had left the table, that I was able to get them talking more freely. “I suppose we have changed,” Helen said. “Things that mattered a lot before don’t seem to now. Jim’s father can’t understand why we treat future and security so lightly.”

“It doesn’t much matter what one does, does it?” Jim put in. “For all we know, we might leave England altogether.”

“Are you planning to?” I asked.

"Not at all, that's Jim's fed-up phrase." Helen smiled as if to say that all things were possible but this. "It's not that bad, really," she went on.

"Helen is just being very English," Jim said from the corner where he had begun to open a box of chocolates I'd brought. "Why not get out and have a go at it somewhere else?" He looked at her humorously out of the corner of his eye "You wouldn't really object to that new dress you've wanted for four years, or some silk stockings. They tell me that in Australia even the kangaroos wear them."

"The trouble with Jim is that he's fallen prey to the little difficulties," Helen explained "We all have in a way"

"They do prey on one," Jim cut in. "The little things, you know When a chair breaks it stays broken for a month before you can get it repaired If one of us buys a suit of clothing, the other has to go without You can't give the baby any of the things you should, you know, a fruit, a toy, an extra bonnet. Helen is the uncomplaining sort I think it's wrong. Why not complain if it gets it off your chest?"

She laughed "Oh, I grumble and swear all the time. I gave the greengrocer a piece of my mind the other day. The poor chap won't forget it"

"Bravo He'll give you two onions instead of three the next time"

I looked at Helen She was tired It was not the tiredness that comes from a sleepless night, but a fatigue accumulated over months, perhaps years It was more than just the little things that had put this kind of strain on her Most of the people I had seen in the underground and on the streets had the same look And it was not merely their worn suits and their shabby coats. It was their gray faces.

Whether she denied it or not, Helen Collins' face showed the hour's wait in the morning queue for the sausage ration, the many evenings spent turning shirt collars, the scrounging to get

up seven dinners a week. It showed the long nights of the blitz when Jim was away and Nancy was born. They had moved to the country then but it hadn't been much safer and there had been the added troubles of bursting pipes, no coal, and dwindling rations. It was almost a year after the war now, but for Helen there hadn't been much change except that Jim was home and Nancy was safe in London. She still wore the same dresses and it still took all of her time to figure out three meals a day.

"But there is no use grumbling too much," Helen went on, disregarding Jim's remark. "Edith, one really needs much less than one thinks. Of course during the war we had VE Day to look forward to. Now it's just the way it is and it'll be like this for a long time."

Jim shrugged and laughed. "We won the war, you know." This was the cynical phrase I was to hear frequently in England along with that other one, "I couldn't care less."

A mist lay over Hyde Park as I emerged from the underground station at Marble Arch. Except for dim lights in the Cumberland Hotel across the street, it was dark. Two bobbies stood beside the arch motioning with their hands as if they were chasing someone away. As I came closer, I saw two figures on the corner. The sweet smell of cheap perfume came from them as I passed. The bobbies were waving them on. "Time to go home now, girls. It's cold enough and late enough, isn't it? Off with you now, have a go at it again when the weather changes."

Park Lane was frighteningly quiet. I paused at a streetlamp near the Grosvenor House to look at my watch. It was only a quarter to eleven. A sign at the hotel door, visible in a faint light, announced that the ballroom was now open for dinner dancing. There were no sounds, however, no movements inside to indicate that it was crowded, as most London hotels and restaurants were.

Farther down the street the Dorchester looked livelier. As I

passed, a private car pulled up at the curb to receive a group of men and ladies in evening dress who had been waiting in the hotel lobby. The doorman and the chauffeur joined forces to usher the group into the car. "Embassy Club, sir?" the chauffeur asked as he closed the door. Other groups emerged from the hotel and disappeared into waiting cars. For a few moments, the bright chatter and elegant clothes filled the deserted street with life. It was eleven o'clock and the restaurants were closing. Other streets in the gloomy city would be brightened for a while and then the gaiety would disappear again, this time into the bottle clubs on Pall Mall and in Mayfair where "members only" could have gin and Scotch whisky at three pounds a bottle.

The doorman stood at attention saluting a departing car. A sharp wind, sweeping in from the park, seemed to by-pass him without causing the slightest ruffle in his coat or shoulder chevrons. He stood still as a column. No doubt, I thought, he had stood there unshaken throughout the war and would be standing there for the next generation, whatever the insecurity and chafing of people like Helen and Jim. He was as immovable a fixture of the Dorchester as the great chandeliers and the marble pillars in the lobbies.

I had been to the Dorchester for dinner a few nights earlier. Looking at the faded plush chairs, the worn rugs, and the frayed but immaculate uniforms of the waiters, I wondered whether the management, the employees, and all the guests, had not signed a secret pact to resist change and preserve their dignity at all costs. The dining room was cold and draughty but most women wore bare-shouldered evening gowns obviously acquired in prewar days. On our table lay a linen tablecloth with four neatly darned holes. The regulation three-course dinner consisting of soup, shrimp Creole, and a sweet or cheese, looked pathetically lost on the large cardboard menu.

The waiter stood at respectful attention for our wine order.

He was pleased that we had called for the wine list and were giving him an opportunity to make a suggestion from among the very few choices listed. "The sauterne is absolutely up to prewar days," he said. When he returned with the wine, I noticed how proudly he placed it in a silver bucket on the side table and wrapped a napkin around it. Another napkin hung from his arm. There were no napkins for us.

Later I watched him carry the heavy silver tray with our food toward us. Everything in his carriage suggested that this was not merely a shrimp Creole lost in the center of the tray, these were not simply Brussels sprouts in this shiny, covered vegetable dish. To serve us he used a fork and spoon and lifted the shrimps individually as though they were delicate pheasant croquettes and the Brussels sprouts were small artichokes. He poured the wine with the same tenderness and then stood back to survey the table once more to be sure that every detail was correct. His proud face seemed to say, "There will always be the Dorchester, come what may."

The wind, the darkness, and the silence closed in on me now. I hurried toward Hyde Park Corner in the hope that there would be more lights and more activity there.

A taxi turned the corner and I caught it. The leather of the seat felt cold through my coat but I was glad to be inside. I couldn't see the driver's face. I leaned forward, opened the glass partition separating us, and thought of a question I wanted to talk if only to break the silence and I had discovered by now that most London cabbies were ready to engage in conversation these days, especially with Americans. But this was apparently destined to be a one-sided affair. I started with the weather.

"Misty tonight, isn't it?"

"Like most nights."

"The wind may break it up though," I pressed.

"Perhaps."

I tried another tack. "The city looks pretty desolate."

"Hm"

It was no use. We came to Grosvenor Place where I told him to stop. I could walk to the mews. His face showed no expression when he accepted my shilling tip for the short ride. There was just the usual, curt "k you" All I could see about him was that he looked much older than I had expected

As I turned the corner I heard the screeching noise of a collision behind me. I looked around and saw my taxi standing at an awkward angle near the curb. The car which had smashed into it stood a short distance away. A few people materialized out of the darkness to look on. A bobby came up from Hyde Park Corner. The taxi driver stood in the middle of the road holding his left arm. The bobby asked some questions and took notes in a little book. The driver had blood on his hand but it didn't seem to bother him. He looked at his broken car and shook his head. "It's the limit. You can't get parts in the whole of England" He walked slowly around the car. "Governor, I just give up. This is when a bloke like me says I've had enough" The policeman went on calmly writing down the names and addresses and registration numbers. The people who had been standing about disappeared. I walked away.

There was a faint light in the hall of the Chambers. Mr. Broom's voice came from upstairs "Is that you, Mrs. Sulkin? There are some telephone messages for you."

I climbed two flights of stairs to the Brooms' kitchen. Mrs. Broom, still showing signs of former beauty in her thick blond hair and tapering white fingers, was pouring tea at a table in the center of the warm room. She wore a flimsy pink negligee over a woolen sweater "Excuse my getup, won't you? I just have to wear these old things. I haven't been able to buy a new nightie, never mind a dress, since the war," she laughed "It's much too cold to wear it without a sweater I must look a sight" She patted her hair to make sure the waves were still in place

Mr Broom looked at her with gleaming pride "Don't worry, dearie, Mr. Broom will take you to Lincoln Road again."

With their tea they had sandwiches made of ham and real butter, the first I had seen in London Over the stove hung two whole hams and against the wall stood two boxes of eggs Mrs Broom, noticing my gaze, blushed "Mr. Broom brought a bit of food from the county."

He munched on his sandwich unperturbed and explained in that familiar monotone "You have to, you know. There is no reason not to any longer We've had it for too long There is no shame in trying to eat and act as though we really won the war May be a good way to get the Socialists out of the government"

I could still see the hunched figure of the taxi driver and feel the chill of the night outside in my bones I asked curtly for my telephone messages and went back downstairs to my room. It was cold by comparison with the Broom kitchen, but for some reason I was glad to find that there was no hot-water bottle in my bed as I slipped between the stiff sheets

Professor Huntley lived in what was left of a block of flats in Cumberland Place Flanking his building were rows of houses with boarded-up windows and doors They looked as if their owners had gone off for the season, or like the rows of brownstones that used to stand empty in upper Manhattan during the depression. At the corner, in an empty lot, stood one of the emergency water tanks that could still be found scattered through the city.

There was little that was recognizable here The street seemed to have grown wider and shorter. But as I knocked at the professor's door, it felt again like one of those evenings when I had come for an hour's extra tutoring for the "London Matric" The black door badly needed a coat of paint, but it seemed to me that it always had In London the impact of destruction was not

as great as in other cities. The natural aging process could easily have explained many a cracked façade or chipped wall. Often it was not until you came close to a building that you noticed it was a burned-out shell and knew something more than time had done this.

Professor Huntley, like his door, needed a fresh coat of paint—a shave, a clean shirt, and a new suit. But he had always seemed to need these things. Of course he did not recognize me immediately. I couldn't expect him to. Hundreds of students had come to his flat during the past thirty-five years to be taught "living history," as he put it. There had never been any concern for facts alone or chronologies. "I don't care if my students don't remember a single date," he once said to me. "It is important to know that Filippo Maria Visconti *was* ruler of Milan and that there *was* a coup d'état by Sforza." He paced the room. "But it is much more important to remember that there were people then like you and me. What do we mean when we refer to the Italian despots? What kind of folk were the Medici? Where did the power of their banks spring from? Why would the failure of those banks spell collapse for all of Europe? Who paid taxes? That's what you want to know, not all the figures."

Professor Huntley had never looked at the clock when he spoke of the people behind the people who got into history books. He would walk back and forth drawing parallels, analogies, bringing the whole of history down to this very English room with its low fire, book-lined walls, queer little statues, and its ridiculous lace doilies yellow and faded on the arms of the leather chairs.

As I sat in one of these chairs now, Professor Huntley placed me in his memory. Poking his fire, he talked as if he were simply continuing a conversation which had been interrupted for only a few minutes.

"There was a good thing about you foreign students," he

said. "You always seemed to be disturbed about one thing or another. I miss it now, you know."

"But haven't you had enough disturbances in recent years to last you for a long time?" I laughed

"Oh, that. That's not what I mean." He turned from the fire and rubbed his coal-stained fingers on his trousers. "There was quite a bit of disturbance around—made good headlines and fine writing material for my colleagues. Yet my students were undisturbed."

"I don't think I know what you mean." I thought of the war years, Dunkerque, the invasion, the rockets. The word "undisturbed" seemed out of place.

Professor Huntley smiled one of those smiles which said, "You think you studied your lesson well, but you didn't really read it carefully enough, now let's go over it again." He spoke softly. "The students came to my rooms cursing the jerries and vowing revenge. Many of them discovered a new emotion, hatred. They hated bitterly. But it was a spontaneous, a localized hatred. Few of them wondered about the thing at large. The world hardly existed. They all did their jobs and did them admirably well. Perhaps there was no time to think about why the jemies did what they did and how it all began and what would come next" He shook his head and sat in a chair near the fire. "It took many a blazing house, a maimed child, a destroyed city, to make too few of them come to me and say. 'This can't just be put into the history books as the Battle of Britain and let go at that. There is such a thing as a world to live in that will have to come out of it all.' There weren't enough troubled why's and how's. They knew we'd win, we had to, as everyone said. But how many realized the changes in the air? It's in the race, I suppose. We're allergic to change" He paused to fill his pipe out of a wooden bowl that stood on the mantel over the fireplace.

"But surely people must have thought things would be better once the war was over," I said.

"Oh, yes. VE Day was going to bring butter and homemade cake and oranges back on the table and new houses would spring up overnight and slums would disappear" Professor Huntley shook his head. "Great Britain has made history for generations and yet time has suddenly caught up with her. Do you realize that peace caught us with a quarter of our assets wiped out, about half of our shipping destroyed, the worst housing problem we've ever had on our hands? But even worse than that, our factories and mines are obsolete, millions under our rule in the far corners of the earth are clamoring for independence, our own people at home are totally exhausted. Change was forced on us by history—and a jolly good thing too." He smiled and there was a mischievous twinkle in his blue eyes. For a moment he reminded me of a youngster enjoying a clever prank. He walked across the room and resumed his lecture.

"This is history, young lady. The blitz was the drama and the color of war. Perhaps it was a more devastating war than we have ever had, but as far as a historian is concerned, it was just another war—a negative force. The all-important chapter is in the making now. When I walk through the dim streets at night, I can see restlessness in the people. I can hear it in their grumblings. The latest polls show that 40 per cent want to emigrate. They're tired of war and they have not yet had any of the fruits of peace."

"It's a very gloomy picture that you paint, professor. Is there a way out?" I asked.

He shrugged. "There is a way out if we use our heads. Everybody knows that we're racing with the clock. If we want to survive, we'll just have to change. We're obsolete. The Empire, as we ran it, is an outdated thing, just as outdated as our machines. We have to modernize in every way. Our coal mines, our automotive industry. If we want butter and eggs to return to our table, we'll have to export everything we produce and not waste our coal in these things"—he pointed to the fireplace—

"just because our grandfathers told us that central heating was bad for the blood. We freeze and don't admit it. We're just beginning to realize it now that we can't get longies" He chuckled

His excitement was pleasant to watch. I wondered how many Englishmen would agree. "But if as you say, Professor Huntley, people are tired and want to leave the country, who will carry out this modernization?"

"We've had greater hardships in our history and less worthy ideals and we managed," he went on. "The idea of the British Commonwealth of Nations was an experiment. It served its purpose and must now give way to a new experiment. What the Labor government is trying to do now is the new British experiment. It will mean something to the whole world if we work it out well, if we can find out how to make working conditions easier, build more schools, and wipe out slums. Why isn't an experiment like that worth all these hardships?"

I looked up at his face. It seemed suddenly to have been filled with sadness. The rubbed edges of his cuffs and his slight figure sunk deep in the worn leather chair reminded me of a used history book torn at the edges. He was silent for a long while, chewing his pipe, probably dreaming of this glorious chapter in history which he would soon be too old to teach. Perhaps if you were seventy-five years old the only way you could look at things was through the eyes of history.

A few moments later I stood up to leave, for I could see that he was tired. "It's too bad," I said, "that Britain's experiment must be carried out on people who have gone through so much and would like to rest a bit now."

He stood in the doorway and smiled. "There is never a right time for an experiment. I suppose it is in the nature of humanity to wait until the body is almost drained of blood before one has the courage to inject a new drug."

Lynn, the Scottish maid at the Chambers, lingered in the doorway after placing the tea and rolls on my night table. I felt her gaze on my back. She was a plump, dark-haired girl with a pimply red face and colorless eyes. She wore a thick black sweater over a patched shirt. The small apron covering her stomach had no doubt once been white. She twisted the heel of her right shoe from side to side as she continued to stare at me.

"You Americans always manage to look smashing, don't you?"

I laughed. I didn't feel a bit smashing that morning. My eyes were swollen and my nose was red and sore from a miserable head cold.

The girl moved in from the doorway and continued to talk in a dreamy voice. "Is it the way they say it is over there?"

"What do they say?"

"Oh, you know, like you see it in the cinema. Everything shiny and everybody looking elegant."

"No, Lynn, it isn't entirely the way the movies show it."

She cast a longing glance at the two sweaters and suit hanging on the chair and at my simple white beret on the dresser.

"We never have anything like that here. The clothes you have, I mean."

It was funny because the suit and the sweaters, I had thought, were quite English.

"A white hat in winter is something we'd never think up in England. Oh, I'm so fed up here. What can a girl look to?"

"You're from Scotland, aren't you? There were many American soldiers up there. Would you like to have married one?"

She sighed. "Oh, yes, ma'am. I liked it at home until the war. We have a nice house and a farm and we all work hard. But nothing ever happened. My mother is terribly strict and she wouldn't ever let me go out with a Yank. The older girls did, though, and I stayed home and watched them marry the lads. I just couldn't stand it at home after that. Work, work, and noth-

ing for it. I saved some money and came to London, but it's the same here. It's too bad I didn't get myself a Yank and go away."

"You might have been lonely in America. It's quite different over there, you know. Besides, you're only about nineteen, aren't you? There are plenty of English boys to marry," I volunteered.

"No, ma'am, I can't go out like this without a decent frock or enough coupons to buy one and get a nice boy to marry me, can I? And even if I do, it will be the same worrying about all the same things. You stay here long enough and you'll see what I mean. Can't you take me back with you in one of those suit-cases?" She laughed. "My mother would have scolded me for this talk. She says it's wicked even to dream about these things. I guess I shouldn't dream so much."

The booming voice of Mr. Broom could be heard. "Lynn, Lynn! Where is that wench?"

She turned abruptly toward the door. "He sounds awfully upset. He gets fearsome. Mother would have said it serves me right," she whispered breathlessly as she ran out of the room. "Thank you, ma'am."

I finished my tea and rolls. The jam was sticky and sour but I was hungry enough not to care. Why had she thanked me? She had been comical running out on her twisted heels, believing somewhere inside of her that she had committed a sin. Ten minutes of useless dreaming. There was no time for it. I could hear Mr. Broom's voice again. "Hurry now! There are four more breakfasts and six rooms to clean. Wasting your day in there, indeed!"

As I walked out I saw her panting up the stairs with two trays, hurrying to make up for lost time.

My conversation with Lynn had a cheering effect on me. People refused to give up dreams. Lynn had her dream and Professor Huntley had his dream. Whether it was a cinderella

dream or the dream of an idealist, it kept them going. Even Mr. Broom dreamed of being a big man again in Florida.

Now in January, 1946, the whole city of London was paying service to a dream. It had thrown its gates open to delegates of fifty-one nations who crowded all available rooms, gobbled up precious food, and lengthened the queues at concert halls, theaters and cinemas. Everywhere colorful signs pointed toward Westminster where the first United Nations Assembly was to meet.

Nothing was too good for the visitors. People gave up their comfort for the delegates and their staffs, carpenters left their private customers to build an auditorium, electricians installed lighting and recording equipment and broadcasting booths, technicians built a huge telephone network with fifty private booths so that delegates and correspondents could report the proceedings back home.

When one entered Central Hall among the impressive buildings of Whitehall, it was difficult to remember that the city outside was cold and drab and that everywhere walls were shedding their paint. The bright flags of the fifty-one member nations covered the sides of a huge marble hall, smartly uniformed pages stood ready to serve. The great marble steps had been scrubbed and covered with thick carpeting for the occasion.

As opening day drew near, newspapers, still restricted to four pages, pushed the news of an impending coal crisis to the back pages to make way for enthusiastic stories and hopeful editorials about this conference which was to draw up a working constitution for the infant United Nations Organization. In the pubs and the underground I caught snatches of conversation. "Will there be a United Nations parade?" "Where are they putting them all up? You couldn't get a hotel room in the city last week." A girl at the beauty parlor, complaining about the shortage of soap, shampoo, and nail polish, exclaimed brightly, "But,

of course, this conference may change a lot of things" The taxi driver who brought me to Central Hall for the first time said: "It may be the beginning of a real peace, miss. What do you think?"

The opening was indeed an impressive affair. From the CBS radio booth I looked down on Arab and Persian delegations in their national costumes, Indian women in colorful saris, nervous Poles in ill-fitting suits, Frenchmen in short jackets. The gallery was full of correspondents from every corner of the world who seemed more nervous than the delegates below.

When the first session finally got under way, there were speeches, more speeches, debates about procedure and protocol. Each nation, counting this great opening of a new world organization a major event, decided that it must be heard whether called or uncalled.

Suddenly there was an argument. The Russian delegation requested that the chairman be elected by acclamation, not by ballot as had been agreed. The simultaneous translators sat up at their microphones, stenographers grasped their pencils, correspondents, who had begun sliding down in their chairs, perked up and then hurried to the press room to file their dispatches. They seemed glad that a crisis was developing. But there was a compromise. It was settled, and the correspondents came back to doze in their chairs as the speeches began again. Delegates wandered out into the marble hall to stare at the paintings and exchange pleasantries about the cocktail parties they had been to.

Members of six committees—Security, Social and Humanitarian, Industrial, Trusteeship, Budgetary, Legal—wrangled over their problems. Two Poles argued about reparations which were not on the agenda, a Chinese delegate complained about the lack of hospitality of the people of Greenwich, Connecticut, who had refused to allow the United Nations into their area. A feeling came over me that these hundreds of delegates gathered at Central Hall were just as removed from London and its people

as the elegant halls and impressive mechanical devices were removed from the realities of keeping warm in a London room or spending an hour trying to put through a bunk call to a suburb. They had entangled themselves in statistics and details. Enthusiasm waned

Some of the small nations, however, continued to show excitement. Young delegates from Czechoslovakia and Norway gathered pressmen around a table in the canteen at Church House. They were former members of the underground and now, with passion, they tried to impress their sincerity upon the reporters. "The main job of this assembly," they declared, "is to provide a machinery which will make it easier for the great powers to agree. Our future depends on their agreement."

A wiry Italian correspondent raced down the stairs to telephone this statement to Rome. I had watched him before, nervously twisting in the telephone booth as he dictated verbatim transcripts of the conference to his editor. His telephone bills were probably much higher than his salary. He was continuously excited. Every word uttered in Central Hall was important to him and he despised the cynicism and lethargy of the other correspondents.

These others seemed to be almost totally uninterested in the proceedings. They attended the string of diplomatic parties, wrote stories about Vishinsky's young daughter, Zina, and the amounts of caviar served at Soviet receptions, and together with the delegates, their researchers, translators, and secretaries, they floated back and forth from Claridge's to the Dorchester to the Connaught to Westminster as if it were all nothing more than a rather boring international cocktail party.

Perhaps it was their attitude which removed the proceedings at the United Nations Conference further and further from the people of London. Perhaps it was the endless debates themselves. Hopes for an understanding were fading fast and so was the interest of Londoners. The weather was approaching zero.

Queues for coal were lengthening. Mr. Shinwell's statement about the fuel supply made headlines and provoked discussion in pubs and homes. Fewer and fewer Londoners followed the pretty yellow and blue signs pointing to Church House and Central Hall.

At the bar of the Connaught Hotel I sat talking with a well-known British journalist and Don Pryor, the CBS correspondent. The room was smoky and crowded.

"Geneva all over again," the Englishman was saying. "The speeches made last week could have been made twenty-six years ago. In both cases the planners were so much in love with their plans that they couldn't give them up even if it was for something better. Why don't they just say, 'Look here, old boy, this is just an effort to see if we can get together; let's see if we can't work something out!'" Instead, everyone comes here with the conviction that this is the world's last hope. They build it up too much."

Pryor shook his head. "What's the difference whether you build it up or not? Nothing in the conference room ever seems to concern anybody. It's the big powers playing the game of strategy. Sometimes I get the feeling that there is a determination to fail rather than to succeed."

The Englishman laughed. "The trouble with you is that you're not cynical enough. If you were, you wouldn't be so bitter. You're one of the people I just spoke about. You came here expecting the conference to deal with matters that had something to do with realities and now you find that they don't. It's nothing but the outspoken 'Realpolitik' of Russia against the undercover 'Realpolitik' of the West." He sipped his old-fashioned.

I was also one of those who had expected the conference to deal with human things. But just a few hours earlier I had attended a meeting of a U. N. committee which was supposed to deal with "human rights." It was called "Committee Number

Three." The discussion at this meeting concerned a new category of people—defined as "dissidents." These were displaced persons in Central Europe who, according to the official definition, were able but unwilling to return to their countries of origin. Three sub-categories of people were involved "Poles proper," of whom it was not easy to say how many were willing to return, "Polish Ukrainians," who disliked the Russians as they had disliked the Poles before, Polish Jews, who felt that no place wanted them at all. There were others who were not privileged to be placed in special sub-categories. These included two hundred thousand Balts, a hundred thousand Yugoslavs, twenty thousand White Russians, and assorted others.

In the heated debate of Committee Number Three there was little to indicate that "dissidents" meant three quarters of a million individuals. The Yugoslav delegate rose and in flaming words cried that all "dissidents" who were unwilling to return home thereby revealed themselves as criminals, traitors, and quislings and should be repatriated forcibly. He called for concentration camps and a special native police corps. He was supported by Russia and the Ukraine, opposed by America, France, and Britain. The latter won and the newspapers headlined the event as "another victory of the West in a clash with the East." I wondered what they had won. Months later I met some of these "dissidents." True, they had not been forced to return to the countries of their origin. But they were still in camps.

On the last day of the conference, the sentries at Central Hall looked tired, they didn't bother to ask for our passes. Half the seats on the conference floor were empty. Only three of America's principal delegates were there and that seemed a heavy representation by comparison. The British had only one, the Russians one, and many of the other delegations were just as small. But from our small radio booth we could see the galleries filling rapidly.

The floor was just as empty and the galleries even more

crowded by the time Ernest Bevin walked down the center of the hall to the rostrum. He was to deliver a speech about the world's food situation. He spread the pages of his speech while the floodlights focused on him. He looked tired. He began to speak slowly. He stumbled a few times and made some mistakes. He never looked up to see the effect. But he knew what he wanted to say. Without gestures he pleaded for a world offensive against famine. He stated facts and warned of total disaster. Once he did spread his arms in a wide motion and suggested that perhaps nature herself was imposing penalties upon mankind for its stupidity. There was no movement among the delegates when he recalled that for six months he had been trying to make the Allied nations aware of the danger of famine. This, he said, was one problem on which all the Allies ought to be able to agree and co-operate.

That was all. There was an uneasy shifting among the few delegates. I looked up at the packed galleries. The people there had sat in tense silence all through the speech. Londoners of all types were there, workmen from the East End, housewives from the suburbs. There were lawyers, bank clerks, typists, and some who looked like Mr. Broom. They had listened closely because it was something they understood and had wanted to hear. It concerned them. I had a tight feeling of embarrassment for every empty chair on the conference floor. A picture of statesmen preoccupied with all things except the people themselves could not have been made clearer.

I left London for the week end to visit a cousin in Shiplake-on-Thames which was about twenty miles up the river. Like most English villages, this was a pattern of gardens and houses separated by high thick hedges. Although it was still winter, the vegetation was heavy. As I walked up the cinder road from the station, Nina, my cousin's older daughter, came cycling down the hill toward me. "Hello, did you have a good trip?" She

jumped to the ground and stretched out a long arm for a handshake

Her cheeks were flushed and her dark brown eyes glittered as she pushed her bike beside me through a wide strip of wood "Is it as pretty as this in America?" she asked.

I smiled. "There are pretty places there but not the same."

She nodded. "I thought so"

We came to a short street lined with identical houses, each fronted by a tiny garden. The Kewes's house was surrounded by high thickets. Beyond it lay a dirt road where the Green farm began. I had come here quite often before the war

The inside of the house looked crowded, as though many people lived in it. The kitchen was the only heated room in the house and it looked as if most of the household activities were concentrated around the little coal stove near the wall. Beside it stood a laundry rack and a few paces in front of it the family table was already set for a meal. Elsa came in from the garden wiping her hands on an old towel. They looked chapped as she spread her palms to rub the dirt off. I noticed nets of deeply engraved dark lines running through them. The lines had no doubt come from the constant handling of coal

"I guess I can't get them cleaned up now. Sorry, we'll do without a handshake" She turned to unpack a shopping basket full of groceries. It was the week's ration for her family of four. A half-pound package of margarine, two cans of stewed steak, a square of cheese, a package of tea, and a small roast which she was putting aside now, probably to cook for the week end. Instead of the usual four eggs, she had a few packages of chicken feed

"One needs two hours at the store these days. Mr. Lunt seems to have more people registered with him than he used to. I suppose it's the demobs and their families who've returned." Elsa spoke in a quiet, colorless voice. There was an almost calculated

calmness in her movements I knew that she went through her long day with the same unruffled equanimity.

She rose at six every morning, put on a heavy sweater and slacks to keep warm, and went down to the kitchen to start a fire. By the time the family was up, the chill was out of at least this one room. Once her husband was off to catch his train, Nina was off to school, and Vera, the little one, was occupied with her dolls, there were the chickens, the garden, the bedrooms, the laundry, the mending, and the marketing. At night there was not always a chance to sleep, for Vera, who was now five, often woke screaming. "Many children her age do," Elsa explained. "It's the result of the war, of course. She still thinks she hears planes. We give her bromide but sometimes it doesn't help. I guess time will take care of it."

There was nothing in Elsa's way of life to suggest that she was not just one of a million British women making the best of things. And yet she was different. She was a Russian, married to a Czech, and had come to England from Prague shortly after Munich. Together with another Czech couple they had moved to Shiplake early in the war and had soon blended into a war-time English community.

Having put the groceries away she now led me into the living room. We moved our chairs as close to the fireplace as we could and lit cigarettes.

"The house seems so empty with everybody gone," Elsa was saying. "Frantisek and Trude left for Prague two days ago. We're practically the only ones remaining of the Czech crowd."

"Have you decided yet whether or not to return to Czechoslovakia?" I asked.

She shook her head. "It's not as simple as it sounds. The war is over. Czechoslovakia is liberated. Pack your bags and go. It was easy the first year or two. We were going home the minute it was over. But seven years is a long time to live in one place and even a longer time to be away from a place. Here are the

children, especially Nina" She took a deep puff at her cigarette.

"I suppose Nina would be heartbroken if you took her away from England."

Elsa nodded. "You and I can understand it better than most people. She feels that she belongs here. She's perfectly English. She gets furious when we tell her she isn't and never will be. We don't want to fool ourselves, Edith. The war is over now and we are the foreigners again."

"But Nina is only eleven, don't you think she will get used to Prague in a short while?" I suggested

Elsa shook her head. "Did you ever get used to any one place? Perhaps America, but that's different. Besides, how do we know what the future holds for Czechoslovakia? I understand that they've become quite nationalistic. They may not even consider Nina Czech. She has a Russian mother and was brought up in England." She paused for a moment and then continued slowly. "I'm perfectly willing to burn my bridges and cast my vote for England. If I could only promise that child that when she gets older she won't have to hear 'But you're not really English, Miss Kewes'."

"Elsa, when I lived here it was difficult at first but I made some close friends and was generally accepted after a while," I said

"I know. But you were a foreign student and you were gradually accepted as such. Nina will not be a foreign student with a place to go back to when school is over. She *feels* and *is* and *wants to be* English. Unfortunately, though, you can't if your father speaks the language with a broad Slavic accent and your mother was born in Vladivostok."

There was nothing much I could say. She rose and threw the cigarette into the fire. "I'm sorry I bothered you like this. It's good to talk about it sometimes. Let's have some tea now with the fruitcake you brought. By the way, when I was in London the other day Nina drank the whole can of grapefruit juice you

sent and was ill for a whole day." She hurried out to serve an English tea.

Nina and I took a long walk the next morning toward Henley.

"I'd like to show you how to go up over the hill by the pasture," she said. "It's a difficult walk but I'd like to take you."

We walked up a long low hill skirting the edge of a broad pasture. The path was walled on both sides by tall cypruses that met overhead. It was February but the ground was soft. Nina picked up a switch and peeled its bark as we walked along.

"I suppose it'll be spring in about a month," she said.

From the top of the hill we looked down to the river which glittered in the weak sunlight.

"That's Mr. Devlin's boat down there." She extended a thin finger "He owns this land and he took the boat to Dunkerque. There hasn't been much boating here because of the petrol. There might be this summer, though."

We climbed through a wooden fence and entered a small forest.

"I called it my Robin Hood forest when I was smaller," Nina said

At the edge of the forest Nina pointed to a tiny stone church half-hidden in the brush. It seemed hardly larger than the sunken tombstone imbedded in the churchyard.

"Isn't there a barn with a hand-carved front just on the other side of the hill?" I asked.

Nina fixed large surprised eyes on me. "Yes Over there." She pointed to the right. It stood across the road from the church and its brown wooden walls looked just as old as the church stones.

We turned back, and Nina asked, "Have you been through here before?"

"Yes. Nina And I've always felt the same way you do about it."

"As though it were a private thing like your own?"

"Exactly. And I like it even better now because it's one thing which hasn't changed."

She stooped to pick a piece of grass. Then she ran ahead and shouted, "You better hurry if you want to get to the Green's. They're expecting you about now."

It was Sunday, but Mrs Green was out on the dirt road lifting heavy milk cans onto a truck. She wore high boots and a heavy man's coat. Her ruddy face showed beads of perspiration under a knitted sailor cap. Her two daughters, one twelve, the other fifteen, were helping her by rolling the cans toward the truck.

"Go right in, Mrs Sulkin. Mr. Green is inside and I'll be there presently. Just let me finish here."

"Do you think I could help?"

She laughed lustily. "Fancy wanting to help in those clothes. During the war they used to come here even frailer than you, but at least they had heavy uniforms. Run along into the house now."

Mrs. Green had always frightened me, and I wouldn't dream of disobeying her now. Just as her daughter wouldn't think of begging off work on a Sunday. Mrs Green was well known throughout the district. Her massive figure commanded the respect of all. Mr Green was a quiet, hard-working farmer, but of late years engrossed in politics and books, with the hearty approval of his wife. Everybody knew that she ran the farm, which was one of the largest in the neighborhood. It stocked cows for milk and grew potatoes, vegetables, and some wheat.

The house hadn't changed much inside. The wicker and leather chairs were still there with the doilies on their arms, and the same old round table stood in the center of the room with a large lamp on it. Mr. Green was reading a newspaper by the fire.

"Come in and sit down. Have a cup of tea." A kettle simmered on the grate.

"I know England well enough never to refuse a cup of tea."

He poured the tea into a heavy mug. "Now, sit down. You've been here about a month, have you?" I nodded. "You attended all the goings on in Central Hall, I suppose" He waved his hand in disgust. "Too early to start on all those international things. Why not clear up the mess at home first? When one of these beasts in there is sick, I don't take her and milk her and milk her until she dies I let her rest for a few days."

"Which one is the sick beast, Mr. Green? England, Russia, Europe, or the whole world?"

"The whole world, of course. But I've made up my mind to worry about England now. Take our situation. You've been here long enough to know that we're not any better off than we were during the war. But we could have been Take that loan we got from you Americans. Now that could go a long way. But it isn't going to because we're keeping up navies and armies in Greece and Palestine and everywhere where we have no business being."

"Why, Mr. Green, you talk like a Bolshy!"

"They call me that around here I'm just a good Laborite, have been for forty years, and I can't see them squander their big chance I learned jolly many things during the war when we had all sorts of people working here. Take one couple, a husband and wife with two children. They were sent up by the housing office She was a tall, husky one, said she'd worked on a milk farm before and would work the hours Mrs. Green works, if we let her live in the barn and gave her the milk ration for the children She didn't speak like an Englishwoman and Mrs Green did have her objections But then we thought of the Keweses and their friends and how well they turned out. It was in the middle of the blitz and we decided we'd let them stay on a bit. At first they were just like any other foreigners. They talked some strange language and were different in their ways But that

girl would be up in the morning at four and have thirty cows milked before Mrs. Green could say boo. She made the barn into a real home. The children were clean and she was always ready to help in the chicken coops and with the pigs and the hay. About six weeks after they came, we learned they were Palestinians. They had lived on a collective farm in Palestine and he was in London doing some government work. They told us about their Labor party over there. They were both members. They told us what the collective farms were like and how they built up the land from a desert." Mr. Green paused and nodded his head as if he were recalling the old conversations and perhaps political arguments that he had had with his tenants.

"They showed us pictures and it sort of came home. We all went up to the Labor Conference last summer. The husband was a Palestine delegate. Why, at that time, Laski and Ernie Bevin and everybody promised that if Labor got in they'd let the Jews have a country there and let them build more of their farms and raise more of those husky, fair youngsters like this Amos and Ruth of theirs." He rubbed his palm on his knee in anger. "Are we doing it now? No. We're keeping our troops there and that's where the dollars will go. I suppose it's the same with India and other places except that we don't know anybody from there to point out these things. If we don't give up these old ideas, the Labor government will've had it and either the Tories or the Communists will take over."

Mrs. Green walked in now, still wearing her coat and heavy boots. "Is Mr. Green liquidating the Empire for you? When I listen to him I understand why the Tories say, 'We were the caretaker government and this is the undertaker government.'" She poured herself a cup of tea.

"Aside from foreign policy," I asked Mr. Green, "do you think the Labor government is doing a good job here at home?"

"I think they're doing a splendid job of work in the factories

but not on the farms. It's promises again and they haven't got the sense to talk to the people."

"They should've put you in Downing Street instead of in Shiplake and you'd have shown them, I guess," Mrs. Green remarked.

Her husband ignored her. "Why, in the Blackpool Conference they stated again that farm workers should have wages and conditions equal to those in other industries. Most of them get less. I can keep the men on my place because I pay them a high wage, four pound ten a week—that's the minimum wage in the pits. We farmers are doing all right. We've got our union and we all made money during the war. But the farm hands get little of that. The food shortage is going to get worse if they don't get a raise. Many of them who voted Labor are now turning away. The other night I heard them singing a song in the pub. It went.

'Though lost to sight, to memory dear
His election speeches still remain,
One only hopes his heart doth cheer
That they will vote for him again.' "

He sang the song with a high cracked voice. "Tom Williams, the Minister of Agriculture, should announce a charter for farm workers. The sort of thing they put out for industry."

His wife nodded vigorously. "Mr. Green always talks about that and it's what I feel too. Working hard the way we do here, we should hear more about what's being done. There's so little else to cheer. Mr. Green and I have always been Laborites in a Tory community and now that we're in we don't even have the facts to convince them what a good job we're doing. They come out with their *Times* and all their other papers and we have nothing."

Mr. Green stood up and crossed the room. "I must see how little Nina is doing. We've got a new calf that we named after

the Kewes girl. She's been ill for the better part of a week. I hope I'll see you again, Mrs Sulkin. Good day."

"I'm afraid it's getting late," I said. "I think I must leave. Thanks for the lovely cup of tea, Mrs Green"

"Never mind." She was clearing away the cups. "Do you remember Paddy, Mr Green's helper?"

"Yes, indeed, isn't he the Welsh boy who came here the summer I was here?"

"Yes He's been in the forces He's demobbed now and back on the job He's driving into London in the morning and can give you a lift if you're going in" She was brusque. Mrs Green never wanted people to think that she was not as stern as she looked

"That'll be fine Thanks very much."

"He'll fetch you at the Keweses at half-past seven Goodbye now"

Paddy was a quiet, soft-spoken Welshman His dark weather-beaten skin was tightly drawn over his thin face When he laughed, his cheeks wrinkled like an accordion There was something melancholy about him Nobody knew much about his past except that he had come from a sheep farm in northern Wales and was married to a girl from Maidenhead. He did not usually talk much and I had to draw the words out of his mouth now as we drove toward London

"Mrs. Green tells me you were just demobilized recently. Where were you during the war, Paddy?"

"Africa, Italy, and the Western front. Mostly Belgium and 'Holland'" He stared ahead dispassionately "I've been demobbed five months now, away over four years"

"Was your family here all the time?"

"Yes, my wife and the children stayed with my mother-in-law in Maidenhead"

"How many children do you have now? I remember you just had one."

He smiled "That was Geraldine. She's nine now. There is John, just about five, and Timothy will be a month old tomorrow."

"Are you all still living with your mother-in-law?"

"No We've got one of the houses just on the other side of the farm." He answered my questions automatically without interest. We sat in silence for a while, then he began talking as if to himself.

"When I came home I thought, 'Paddy, my boy, this'll be a good life for you now.' We all had the wrong idea. I suppose loneliness made it all look so shiny."

"Why, you seem to be heading for a good life with a fine family, your old job and a house."

He laughed harshly. "A good life. Why, seventy or seventy-five bob a week used to be a good life and a bloke could say to himself, 'Now you can raise a family the way you always dreamed about.' I made big plans for Geraldine and John while I was away. I knew there was no sense dreaming when I got back."

"But why, Paddy?"

"Why? Because it's all words, miss." He was angry now. "Ask anybody in the village whether they feel that it's a Labor government up there and whether they're still making plans for themselves. They give us these houses all right. But can you get anything to put in them? The baby's still in the clothes basket and they promised us a crib five months ago on the docket." He paused and lit a cigarette. "What's the use talking? A man can't change it. They don't have any respect for a home life up in London. I don't care about myself. It's the kiddies. I see in the papers all the material being cut up in dresses for Princess Margaret and Elizabeth. But I can't get any curtains for my home."

It was the first time I had heard any Englishman criticize the Royal Family.

"I don't care if they have hundreds of dresses. But I want Geraldine to grow up in a home that will make her a fine lady when she is seventeen." We stopped for a school bus. It was crowded with rosy-cheeked, snub-nosed children

"Paddy, they seem to look happy and healthy"

"Yes, but ask their parents what they have to give up for that. Why, just to keep them clean you have to forego washing yourself as much as you want to. There isn't enough soap to go around. And how many of them do you think will turn out all right? They may be healthy, but they'll want to run off somewhere before the milk dries on their chin." He frowned. "I don't care if I can't get what I need. A man can always go to a pub, have an ale, some cheese and bread, and be satisfied. The kiddies, though, have to have a home to be proud of. If Geraldine doesn't have a carpet on the floor now and curtains to draw at night, how will she know when she's sixteen or seventeen that you're supposed to draw the curtains and light the fire and sit down comfortably to read or listen to the wireless or have a little chat. She'll want to run off to the pub and the lads she'll meet there won't know another life because they never had it." He looked straight at me now. "What was the sense in coming home?" He flipped the cigarette out the window. The anger in his eyes faded and was slowly replaced by the dull resigned melancholy.

It was raining and dark outside. Mr. Broom came up to fetch my bags. He asked whether I could pay my bills in dollars.

"You know, if we go to Florida again, we could use them"

I hated Mr. Broom now. I had found him an interesting character in the beginning, but now he revolted me. Maybe it was because I had seen so few of his kind in England. He stood out

like a sore thumb with his pearl pin and the hams hanging in his kitchen

"No, Mr Broom, I have only pounds." I turned to lock my overnight case.

"By the way, did you find anything missing when you were packing? I sacked the young Scottish lass this morning. It seems she was stealing"

I looked at his small blue eyes and his thick lower lip and watched a pretense of shock register on his face as I said, "Yes, I told Mrs. Broom yesterday that my gold chain and black sweater were gone from the room."

He puckered up his face and clicked his tongue "Too bad They all steal now, you know. But you've got to have servants in a hotel. I'm so sorry."

I handed the last case to him and walked downstairs Mrs. Broom did not come down to say goodbye I wondered whether she was wearing my sweater under her pink negligee

The bus taking me to Northolt Airfield passed rows of blocked-up houses The rain made them look desolate I wondered, as I looked at the people moving along the streets hunched under their umbrellas, whether many of them felt as hopeless and angry as Paddy the Welshman Perhaps if the government had had more imagination, if it had been able to talk to people about the experiment and make them see that it was worth giving things up, as Professor Huntley had put it . . . Perhaps if Clement Atlee had had some Churchillian rhetoric in him . . . Perhaps instead of warning that this was going to be an era of work and gloom, if they had tried to sell optimism, it would have been easier for Helen to put up with the "little things"

The rain beat heavily on the window of the bus British Airlines representatives walked from one passenger to another repeating, "Nasty day, isn't it."

At Northolt the airline girls smiled professionally and apolo-

gized for the weather and the cold and guided us to a lounge with a blazing fire. A customs inspector going through my bags drew forth a book and looked at the title. He shook his head. "Wanderings of a diseased mind, that's what it is, wanderings of a diseased mind. But we might all be better off if we could wander like him."

The book was James Joyce's *Stephen Hero*.

The Right and the Wrong

S W E D E N

“JUST ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES and we’ll be all right. See those lights? It’s magnificent. A wonderful city.” Mr. Brody blew at his fingers and stamped his feet. The polite but firm British attendant dampened his enthusiasm by reminding him that we were landing at Stockholm in five minutes and would he please fasten his safety belt

We were only six on this C47 flight which had so far taken seven hours from London. As the trip progressed, we had all become deeply absorbed with keeping warm. The temperature was just above zero. Mr. Brody, who sat next to me, had introduced himself immediately as a fellow American. By now I knew a good deal about him, for he had begun talking at Northolt and was still at it. I knew about his wife and two daughters, his trips to many parts of Europe, his stay in England until the war, his closeness to the White House.

“You know,” he had said, “in FDR’s day . . .” He didn’t say how he had come to know the President, he also slid quickly over that part of his colorful career which included a chat with “Winston” and almost a meeting with Stalin which “didn’t come off due to the usual reasons, you understand.” He spoke in a

slow nasal voice and only when he whispered an important piece of information about which he was excited did his carefully studied Standard English speech slip into the remnants of a Georgia Cracker dialect. "Take it from me," he said once, forgetting his dignity. "You can take this whole dump, includin' England, and give it back to the Indians. None of it is worth a damn except this here counuy we're going to."

He spoke intimately of the great culture and prosperity of the Swedes. "This is my fourth trip in six months. I say the future's between America and Sweden. I was there last week end and saw our Minister. He gave a dinner party for me. He's all right, he really knows his job"

I tried to sleep but Mr. Brody assured me that one never should in this temperature and at such high altitude. And so I heard more about his "hops to Casablanca and Alaska during the war." I heard about the house he planned to buy outside Stockholm where he was going to "set up" his wife who was beautiful and dignified—but not as lovely as the girls in Stockholm—and his two daughters, one of whom had great musical talent and the other who would "do all right on her looks." I still had no idea what Mr. Brody actually did and I was curious.

We landed As I stepped from the plane the pure whiteness hurt my eyes. The field was covered with smooth thin snow. The air was sharp I looked around for my husband, who was to meet me here, but a fleet of Swedish reporters and photographers surrounded us and blocked my view They asked questions in sing-song English, hoping to find a celebrity. Mr. Brody sought out a lean blond boy. "You remember me, don't you? Well, I can say I am happy to be back in Sweden at the special invitation of the " (I couldn't catch the long Swedish name) "ski company. I'd like to say that they were always helpful to me and made it possible for the first postwar shipment of three thousand pairs of Swedish skis to reach America just in time for

the season. I am here to further this mutually satisfactory relationship" The young man made a few notes and left

Mr. Brody turned to me and smiled "They got my picture last time I'm glad they didn't flash those bulbs in my eyes this time."

Two Englishmen hurried past us. "Let's get some of those sandwiches and coffee right away," one of them said.

"Better be careful, it's real butter and real cream—can give you a bad stomach if you take too much."

The passport control officer was bright and fresh looking like most of the other people in the airport building. They all seemed to match the shiny white counters and the chromium plating of the fixtures. At a candy stand in the corner, a colorful sign advertised Wrigley's Spearmint Chewing Gum. The control officer returned my passport together with three small cards. "These are your restaurant ration coupons, madame. Welcome to Sweden."

Beyond the glass partition my husband Sidney was waiting for me wearing a black fur hat. "This is just borrowed for the occasion." He grinned as we embraced. "They're too expensive to buy." We drove into the city in a long black limousine. "Is the car also borrowed for the occasion?" I asked.

He laughed. "It's just an ordinary Stockholm taxi." As we moved along, he pointed out the sights and I gathered that he'd gotten to know the city well in the three months he'd been here.

It was just beginning to grow dark, but the wide snow-covered streets, the buildings, the people, the lights just coming on, had a crystal brilliance. I realized only now how dark London had been. Along the main streets multi-colored neon signs glittered, crowds of well-dressed, radiant-faced people milled about cinemas. I remembered the silent, docile expressions on the faces of Londoners queuing up in Leicester Square and Piccadilly Circus.

As if reading my thoughts Sidney remarked "England was pretty grim, wasn't it?"

I nodded

"You'll find things are too good here"

We drew up before an old apartment building on a wide street overlooking a broad expanse of frozen water. Down the middle of the road, its full length, lay stacks of cut logs ready for the furnaces

A bony middle-aged woman opened the door. Her graying hair was tied in a tight knot at the back of her head. She looked nothing like the pink-cheeked people I had seen on the streets. The apartment had nothing to suggest that this was Sweden either. In the living room I was greeted by a musty odor. There were small round tables covered with dark, heavily embroidered tablecloths whose fringes brushed the floor, a red plush sofa and another covered with damask, a petit-point footstool, large wing chairs with faded cushions depicting angels playing harps. There were thick draperies, dark enough to shut out daylight so that the furniture wouldn't spoil, and massive gilt-framed pictures on the walls. I recalled the apartment of an uncle in Berlin, the house of an aunt in Prague. This was a mixture of those and many others that I had seen on the Continent—but much worse. The crystal icicles of the chandelier hung large and dull, the grand piano, covered with yellowish lace, carried a collection of porcelain nudes, miniature maidens holding bunches of grapes, china candy dishes, and frail pink vases. The entire room was of no style or period—unless it was the eternal period of pomposity.

"It's pretty horrible, isn't it?" Sidney turned to me after the inspection tour was over. "But it was the only available place in Stockholm and it's big enough to house us and the office for a while."

I nodded. "The landlady is strange, isn't she?"

"Yes But you'll find quite a few queer characters in this city. The place hasn't yet recovered from the war."

"You mean the Battle of Sweden?" I laughed.

"They're still engaged in it." My husband smiled "You never know whom you're liable to shake hands with or whose hand he shook before you arrived. We'll have dinner at the Grand just to give you a taste of the atmosphere."

The Grand Hotel Royal was as spacious and impressive as its name. Its mixed architecture was gaudy. It had something of the glitter of the outside. The people, most of them in evening dress, glittered even more. A bowing waiter brought us the famous smorgasbord, ten different kinds of hors d'oeuvres, smoked salmon, mussels, three kinds of herring, and thin slices of smoked reindeer meat. For our bread and butter coupons he brought us an assortment of breads and a dish of rich creamy butter.

"See what I mean?" Sidney remarked as he ordered some woodcock in wine sauce for the main course. "This is how we suffer in Europe." He cast his glance around the room. "You get so used to this oasis that you forget what the real world looks like."

Couples moved around the dance floor to American music. Expensively dressed women who looked like porcelain dolls leaned heavily on the arms of middle-aged men who escorted them among the tables like admired pieces of jewelry. There were polite nods and smiles from table to table. I did not remember having seen such uniform opulence in many years.

"This is what I left in 1939," I said. "It seems that this kind never changes. The international set and their hangers-on."

"You'll find that the war increased their numbers in Stockholm. All kinds of people came here and worked for anyone who'd pay. Many are still around, hanging on to this place and its past glory as a nest of espionage."

"Business must be bad now," I remarked.

"Yes Some of them get bored and stir up fantastic tales of international intrigue. But many who used to stick around the diplomats have switched to the businessmen now. You can call this city Europe's postwar boom town " He leaned toward me and said in a low voice, "Here is a special type—the tipsters—moving toward us now."

Two young men and a girl stopped at our table My husband introduced us briefly and they sat down

"We can order drinks now," the girl said. She spoke with a nondescript accent which had none of the Swedish sing-song.

"Susie means that they can have drinks at this table because we have food here," Sidney explained "There is a restriction against drinking without eating in Sweden."

"Not that it keeps anybody from getting drunk," one of the men said as he reached a heavy hand for a cigarette. "The Swedes have good appetites and they can eat as much as they drink It doesn't make them any more amusing, though." His voice was high pitched like a child's and his pale fat face had a child's pout. "I'm going back to Copenhagen A Dane can't stand Sweden for long."

The girl twisted her mouth in what was meant to be an ironical smile and blew her cigarette smoke out in short puffs "You spent four years here, Knut, and didn't seem to mind it"

"Ya, naturally I didn't mind it then" His gray eyes looked through me into the distance and he fingered his whisky glass nostalgically. "Who minded it then? I still come to the Grand every day because of habit and I think it's worth being a journalist when I remember it Every person here could make a headline. Right at this table Dr. Grassmann used to sit—the shrewdest Gestapo agent in Scandinavia Remember how we discovered he was at the Grand?"

Susie slouched in her chair and waved her hand as if to say "That's old stuff."

"I was in Finland then," the other man broke in. "The best story I remember is when the whole Gestapo was sitting right here while Mme Kollontaj, the Soviet Ambassador, was concluding a peace treaty with the Finns upstairs."

Susie shrugged her shoulders with an air of profound boredom "What I miss mostly is the real correspondents." She emphasized the word *real*. "You read the *Voelkischer Beobachter* and translated the lead, talked to a few visiting businessmen, and if you knew your job you had a story. Everything was one great big piece of juicy gossip and you were part of it so it didn't matter."

The boy who had been to Finland shifted in his chair "You look at it from the female point of view. And, Knut, you're just a fool" He raised his well-shaped head and beat on the table with a forefinger "I say we're still going to have a big story here—the biggest I was talking to some people this morning and things are brewing. The *Daily Mail* is keeping a man here just to report inside stories out of Russia and so are most of the other British papers. I got two good ones today."

Knut rose "There are Von Essen and Hewins over there." The others rose with him, nodded a curt goodbye and wandered off as they had wandered in. It struck me that they had not exchanged a single word with us except for the introduction. Apparently they had been unaware of our presence at the table—except that they had smoked our cigarettes (which would have cost them about seventy-five cents a pack).

"Who are they joining now, someone they can include in their conversation?" I asked my husband as we both laughed.

"Oh, they'll have a good time now. Practically everyone is at that table—all the local tipsters, the rumor manufacturers who float from bar to bar, table to table, legation to legation, correspondent to correspondent, buying and selling their meager wares."

I felt sorry for them I should have expected them here, for

after all, they were an integral part of a neutral capital in war. But somehow I had connected this type only with places like Bucharest, Budapest, Lisbon, and Ankara, forgetting that during the war hundreds of news stories had begun with the words "It is reliably reported in Stockholm . . ." or "A Swedish businessman returning from Berlin reports . . ."

I felt particularly sorry for the girl. She was obviously not Swedish. She probably knew most of the required languages, had lived on most of the Continent, had worked for dozens of correspondents. Her kind was always to be found where there was trouble and once the trouble was over she didn't belong.

The room had grown livelier. A crooner sang, "It's been a long long time." The waiters hurried among the tables carrying brandy glasses and bowls of fruit and rich ice-cream parfaits.

Sidney rose to greet a tall gray-haired man who had just come up. He extended his hand and bowed to kiss mine. "My name is George Axelsson. Welcome to Sweden, Mrs. Sulkin. I was just telling your husband that we would like you to join our table for some brandy."

We followed him across the room. He waved his hand to the left and right like an actor greeting his public. As we passed the table at which the "journalists" sat, he paused to say hello to some of them. I had recognized his name as that of the Swedish correspondent of the *New York Times*. From the way the tipsters spoke to him, I guessed that he was an important source of income to most of them.

There were six people at the Axelsson table. The men rose and pulled up two chairs as we approached. Axelsson ordered brandies for us.

Mr. Croft, the middle-aged Swede sitting next to me, asked, "Have you just come from America?"

I shook my head. "From England."

He sighed. "You must find it quite different here. Poor England. I was there a few months ago to visit some of my wife's

family. It's hopeless." He spoke with an Oxford accent. It was difficult to detect in his face the sorrow of his voice. "We're really blessed here in Sweden, but I'm afraid it may not be for long." He lifted his brandy glass. "But let's enjoy it while we can. Skål, madame." He held his glass in front of his face looking deep in the eyes, took a sip while still keeping his eyes on mine, held the glass again before his face, and finally broke into a smile.

"That's it, Philip, now you've taught her the Swedish skål," Axelsson boomed from my left.

Mr. Croft turned to me again. "As you see, we've been very lucky, and I hope we can stay out of it the next time."

I shrugged my shoulders. "Aren't you being too pessimistic?"

Mr. Croft shook his head vigorously. "You say you've just come from London where the United Nations was meeting and yet you say I am being pessimistic?"

A fair-haired man across the table looked up. "What do they say in America about it?" His tanned face was serious but hardly disturbed.

"I left America about a month ago and there was hardly any talk about war then, at least not among people I met. Not serious talk, anyhow."

The man across the table smiled as if to indicate that the reports he had had from America were quite different. "You know the Swedish people are a peace-loving people," he said. "We haven't been in a war for a hundred years. We hope to continue our neutrality. We hate no one. But, after all, Russia is next door and if there should be any trouble between America and Russia, Sweden will be the battlefield."

Mr. Croft toyed with his glass. "We here in Sweden can't feel safe. From what my business friends tell me, the Russians are making it quite difficult in Finland."

The young man chimed in. "There is terror over there."

"As far as I know there aren't many Soviet troops in Finland now," my husband ventured

The Swedes smiled patronizingly and Axelsson broke in "Now wait a minute, wait a minute Everybody here knows what's happening in Finland. Look at the trials they're conducting of the so-called war criminals. They're on orders from Moscow. There is no question of Finland's independence."

"Now George certainly knows" Mr. Croft nodded. "After all, he's one of the best informed people in Scandinavia."

I took no part in the discussion because I knew nothing about the subject but I was instinctively skeptical.

Mr. Croft sighed deeply. "Of course we're too small to do anything and, besides, we must preserve our neutrality at all costs But I think you Americans must understand that there is great danger from the East"

No doubt Mr. Croft had talked the same way—perhaps with the same words—in 1938 He was like the Swiss businessman I'd seen at a café table in Paris just before Munich who had tried to convince a group of Frenchmen that Hitler's bluff was not dangerous and that the West should unite against the East Like Mr Croft he had also remained neutral, his country also was small and hated no one They had sat around the Grand or the Palace throughout the war, perhaps using different phrases, perhaps with different people, but feeling the same way they had in 1938. Perhaps only ten months ago Mr Croft or the young man across the table had sat here with a businessman from Berlin, smiling and assuring him of their neutrality at all cost and declaring then, as they did now, that Sweden hated no one

Mrs Axelsson, who like the other ladies present had taken no part in the political discussion, now spoke softly "I think you men talk so easily of war because you don't know what it means Mrs Sulkin, I am sure they don't in England or anywhere where they know what bombs can do" She finished abruptly as though she felt she had spoken out of turn.

"That's a fine sentiment, Mrs. Axelsson." Mr. Croft raised his glass "Skål to you." When he had put down his glass he turned to me and changed the subject. "You'll find it very pleasant here in Stockholm, Mrs. Sulkín. There are many Americans here. I hope you and your husband will be able to visit my place in Gothenburg."

"In general, Swedes like Americans," said the other man. "Your Minister is a very fine person."

I was glad we were on another subject. But I was too disturbed by our earlier conversation to be flattered by their affection for America. Perhaps one of them was the president of the ski company which had invited Mr. Brody to Sweden, and perhaps Mr. Brody, in turn, had imparted his confidential information to him on America's stand in world affairs.

Mr. Croft was getting a bit groggy. He had been pouring brandy ceaselessly into the glasses. "Yes," he said, "your Minister is very highly regarded throughout our country. He's all right. He is indeed. I know him well. He serves a fine lunch, and there is nothing wrong with his dinner either."

Stockholm *was* Europe's postwar boom town. The streets, restaurants, hotels, cinemas, and buses were crowded. People and goods of all descriptions filled the shops. Rare French wines sold ration free in the state monopoly liquor stores. Silks, gloves, stockings, nylon girdles, electric shavers, automatic phonographs, flowers and fruit baskets bearing signs, "flown in from Italy," stocked ultra-modern neighborhood stores where the attendants, unused to the rush, made excuses to steady customers for omitting the usual "please" and "thank you." Fancy Swedish glass, Danish silver, sold at unprecedented prices. The three major department stores reminded one of Christmas on Fifth Avenue.

Inside "NK," one of the finest department stores in Europe, were to be found the products of the world's cosmetic indus-

tries, the cloth and linen of Ireland, the shoes of Switzerland, the fashions of Paris and Hollywood, the streamlined furniture of Sweden, and the antiques of Spain, Scotland, and Italy. The food department carried everything from Bird's Eye frozen raspberries to Beluga caviar. The high prices seemed no obstacle to the shoppers who were as varied in appearance and nationality as the merchandise on display. Heavy-set men from the country bought electrical gadgets to modernize the appearance of a suburban kitchen. Farmers' wives tried on French suede platform shoes and frowned hesitantly as they glanced at the sturdy flat-heeled oxfords nearby. Americans could find loud handpainted ties at a "*Fran Amerika*" counter, they were escorted through the store by a bowing and smiling young man who headed the "American service," housed in an office on the executive floor with a star-spangled banner on its wall. The shipping department was busy sending packages to distant parts of the country, twenty-pound food parcels to Norway, Finland, France, and Holland.

Together with the Grand Hotel, "NK" rode the crest of the prosperity wave. Stories in Stockholm had it that the owners of both enterprises, looking for new fields to conquer, were planning to instigate a "Florida boom." Their Florida was to be Ethiopia where they planned to begin building large hotels and a winter resort. Local newspapers carried many a provocative hint about the exciting new project and some society columns were already beginning to run gossip and pictures of Abyssinian weddings.

Stockholm's streets were alive with enthusiastic boomtowners. Huge automobile salons had opened in many parts of the city and intense salesmen could be seen demonstrating the new models from America and England. Dozens of *ovningsbil*—learner's cars—painted pink, blue and yellow—roamed the streets with middle-aged Swedish ladies at the wheel learning how to drive. Movie palaces, featuring Hollywood films, were

crowded with teenagers who applauded ecstatically the heroes of American swing. The largest dance hall in the city devoted itself to jitterbug addicts who came dressed in the long jackets and narrow cuffed trousers of zoot suiters. Newspapers, finger thick, printed page after page of advertisements, columns of social gossip, and ran exciting contests with airplane trips, boats, and automobiles as prizes. All of America's 1920's seemed to have come to life again in Stockholm.

This was the surface pattern, and, having just come from England, it would have been easy for me to form a negative opinion right away. It was difficult not to feel disgusted with the many Mr. Crofts who sat around in luxurious restaurants eating their smorgasbord with smug satisfaction and talking about Swedish telephones ringing all over Europe, Swedish steel going to the far corners of the world, Swedish prefabricated houses sheltering thousands on the Continent, Swedish electrical supplies, timber, the highly developed industrial plants which were unscarred by the war—all the things which made this city a mecca to which the hungry, the tired, and the frayed came from all over Europe.

And yet I was surprised to see very little resentment in the dozens of foreign visitors I encountered daily. They walked among the pink and yellow buildings staring at the shop windows. Most of them had no Swedish currency and so could buy nothing, but they wandered through "NK" for hours to look and sometimes to make notes of what they wanted. They spoke with admiration of the good-looking people, the cleanliness, and, of course, the food, and tried to figure out how they could stay an extra few days.

A week after my arrival, I had tea in the small hotel room of a Dutch doctor. I watched him devour slice after slice of the crisp warm buttered toast and pour himself a third cup of hot chocolate. "They're a highly civilized people, these Swedes

They really know how to live." I looked at the worn cuffs of his shirt and his cracked shoes.

"I should think you'd hate them, Dr. Kollmar," I said.

He laughed. "Hate? You can't hate Sweden." He lit a cigarette and walked to the dresser to open a box of chocolates. "I thought I was going to hate it before I came here. As a matter of fact, I thought I wouldn't want to shake hands with most of them—thinking about how their ore went to Germany and so on. But now when I meet a Swede and hear him talk about his neutrality before the war, during the war, and now, somehow I don't envy him all this." He threw a glance at the remnants of the tea and the candy. "Did you notice how they bathe in their neutrality? And how they feel that they have to explain themselves every time they meet someone from a country like mine?" He smiled and went back to work on the chocolates. "It's very pleasant to think that there is still a place in Europe where one can come and stay in a room like this and eat all the things he has forgotten the taste of, and see beautiful people and walk on such clean streets. I can walk around Stockholm for hours and feel good. I don't mind the way I look or that I eat too much in a restaurant. Perhaps having fought in the war puts me on a different level." He smiled hesitantly. "To be quite immodest, I feel superior."

It was an attitude I had found among other Continentals who came to Stockholm.

Neutrality was a blanket that comforted the right and the wrong alike.

There was on the one hand Madame Gylling, our landlady, who moved around the apartment noiselessly in her felt slippers, pretending to dust the innumerable vases and straighten out the pillows on the sofa. She spoke in whispers to her two handsome daughters when they slipped by the foyer into the back part of the house on their way from school. They were both tall, nar-

row shouldered, and flaxen haired I hardly ever saw them except when they whisked through or when one of them came into the kitchen to fetch a plate. They slept, ate and worked in a room off the kitchen and every time I passed, Mme Gylling shut the door quickly. Somehow I was always aware of her presence. She had that quality of being felt, not heard, about the house.

"All these things are terribly important to me," she explained, stroking a vase, when I surprised her one morning in the living room. "These are all precious things. Most of them are gone. But I have to preserve what we have until my husband gets back from the hospital." She dusted and cleaned and sorted out the knickknacks and doilies with the meticulousness of a devoted caretaker afraid that a broken item would cost her her job. She didn't seem to belong to the apartment or to Sweden.

"One can be very happy here in Sweden," she said one day after bringing me a cup of coffee. "There is everything here, so much of European culture.

"As a European yourself, you can appreciate it better than your husband. I can't bear the thought of most of it lying in ruins." She sighed heavily. "The children and I have nothing to complain about, though, we're glad to be alive." It was the first time she'd mentioned the past.

"Why?" I asked. "Were you in danger?"

"Oh, yes. We got out by sheer luck and it wasn't easy."

"Out of Finland?"

"No. Out of France. The children were brought up in Nice and then in Corsica. Mr. Gylling worked there."

For a moment I felt ashamed. She was a refugee trying to live in style in Sweden by having an elegant address even if it meant renting her whole house. Perhaps the furniture was not even hers but had been left in her charge by some rich friends. I was sorry for having told my husband that she had stolen

our coffee and was charging us fantastic prices for the meals we had at home.

She continued in that strange whisper. I decided that years of hiding from the Germans had left the whispering and the noiseless walk.

"We loved Corsica. There was plenty of food there most of the time and we lived rather well until the fighting began. We got out just in time."

For a moment I was not sure, but it became clear as she went on that she was referring to the patriot uprising and the Allied invasion.

"The Italians were very decent to us. The Corsicans are wild people and when they heard the Allies were across the water they got so excited that they began shooting at every Italian in sight. The children and I got on an Italian freighter just in time. Then we were torpedoed and most of the people aboard were drowned. I don't know how we came through but we did. When we got to Rome things were better again."

"The Germans were in Rome then?" I felt hopelessly cheated. She had fled not from the Germans but to them. Her boat had been torpedoed by Allied submarines and she had felt safe again in what to us had been enemy territory.

"Yes," she went on blithely. "I must say I don't know what we would have done without them in Rome. My husband was in Finland and we had left everything behind in Corsica. The Germans put us up for a while in Rome and then got us across Italy to Austria. I had lived in Vienna as a young girl and it was good to be among friends." She rose and picked up the empty coffee cup. "From Vienna we went to Berlin and waited there through the terror attacks for our permits to come to Sweden."

"Then you really spent the war on the German side, didn't you?" I asked quietly.

Her eyes looked over my shoulder. "We are Finnish subjects

so, in a way, yes. But it was good to come here to Sweden where it didn't matter whose side you were on and where there were no bombs and plenty of food. Like everybody in Sweden, my husband and I are neutral."

On the other hand there were the Rimers who hardly ever paused to think whether they were doing the right thing or the wrong thing. Like hundreds of middle-class Stockholm families, they lived in a modern concrete apartment building with a heavy glass door, a flat roof and a dozen square balconies.

They were as cheerful and modern as their flat. He was a doctor in one of the state hospitals and she worked as an executive secretary. They had a three-year-old boy, a cabin outside the city, and a tiny Citroen. They were both tall and light blond and the boy's hair was nearly white.

Although Kage, the husband, came from Viking stock on the island of Gotland, they prided themselves on not being typically Swedish. "We're not as formal as other Swedes," Kitty would say, pouring out highballs in American style and not waiting to be skalled when we drank. They carried on their life not with exuberance but with permanent contentment. Kage's quiet continuing ambition was to become a leading bronchologist. Nevertheless, it was an ambition which, like the ambitions of most Swedes—as I later discovered—did not intrude itself on his life or stamp him with its mark. Living was routine but they made it enjoyable and questioned little, seldom doubted and never felt insecure.

The Rimers were part of a society in which the standard of living was high, in which the filth of poverty was unknown; and in which success was not a fetish. They bothered no one and had succeeded in letting no one bother them. Who could say they were wrong?

One week end I went skiing with them at Lidingö just outside of Stockholm. Their small two-room cabin stood among a

range of low hills surrounding a lake. Scattered among the snow-covered pines lay dozens of other tiny red, brown, and white cottages.

We skied just outside the cabin. It was three-year-old Thomas' first time on skis. He leaned heavily on his tiny sticks and laughed nervously as he slid down the hill. Kitty stayed close behind him holding a hand out to catch him. Kage called after her, "Leave him alone. If he falls the snow is soft enough."

There were other families going up the trail greeting the Rimers with a cheerful, "*God dag, God dag*," and wishing Thomas good luck on his first day. An older man came down the hill in an expert Christiania. He waved his hands cheerfully and called as he passed, "So the time has come for young Thomas." They regarded it almost as a ritual. There was a quiet pride in Kage as he watched the boy lift himself from the snow and come climbing toward us. On the way home they sang Swedish songs. The child's voice was high pitched and tired.

Later in the afternoon we sat in front of the open fire. The birch wood crackled. My cheeks smarted from the air and the glow of the fire. Thomas fell asleep on the sofa in the corner, his hair covering one side of his small face. Kitty was brewing coffee on an electric heater in the corner. Kage was reading a catalogue of boat models.

I felt as I had felt many times before in Stockholm, completely removed from the rest of the world. There was no radio in the cabin and no newspaper, I wondered whether Kage ever bothered to read the news and what it meant to him if he did. But, after all, Lidingö was hardly very different from Vermont, and one could spend many a week in a farmhouse there without ever worrying about the world outside. Yet Kage Rimer was not a Vermont woodsman. He was a doctor in a big city, on a continent which only ten months earlier had been at war.

He looked up from his book and smiled. "You always look at us as if we seemed funny to you."

"I was just thinking how unbelievably peaceful it is here and how lucky you really are." The last words came out almost automatically.

"Yes, indeed, we are very lucky." The sing-song was pleasant to the ear

"Don't you have any problems?"

"You mean here in Sweden?" He laughed. "We take care of them. Slowly, little by little. We're making progress all the time. In medicine, for example, the new state hospitals we have are probably as good as any in the world. We have enough beds for all our sick and whether the patient has money or not he can get help." He was proud and insistent.

"I know you're pleased with the way things are in Sweden. But how do you manage not to be bothered by what goes on in the rest of Europe?" The question was out now and I wondered what effect it would have.

Kage wrinkled his forehead and tossed his catalogue onto the sofa "We *are* bothered. We're doing as much if not more than others" I thought he sounded angry. "We feed thousands of children here. We ration our food to do it. Every Swede is going to give up a day's salary to help people in Europe" He rose and came to my chair "What you have to understand about Sweden is that we'll do all we can to help whoever is in need, but we refuse to be mixed up in the internal fights and international intrigues that make the world rotten."

It was the first time I had heard excitement in his voice. He spoke seriously and kept his eyes on me all the time

"I feel rather proud that we managed to stay out of it for so long. We have a system which certainly doesn't disturb anybody outside and takes good care of the people inside"

Kitty came to sit on the arm of my chair. "Edith, Kage has just given you the best answer to the question you always ask me—what does a real Swede feel about his neutrality? It took me a long time to understand it myself, being half Scottish, but

Kage hit it right on the head—we're determined to be left alone. Isn't that it, Kage?" She turned to her husband

Kage nodded vehemently. "As a Swede I feel that someone would have to come and shoot first right in my back yard before I'd risk all the things we have achieved here"

"Didn't you feel that you came pretty close to losing it two years ago?" I asked.

Kage nodded "There was a time when I felt the danger of it and most of us did. Most young Swedish doctors went to Finland during the winter war of 1939 You could say it was almost our back yard."

"I lived in Finland before the winter war and during it. And I must say the Swedes were marvelous then," Kitty reminisced.

"You didn't feel the same way about Norway, though, did you?" I asked.

Kitty shook her head. "That's the funny part about most Swedes. They didn't really believe Germany was so bad I suppose I felt more strongly about it than Kage and the rest of our friends because of my British ancestry I couldn't be neutral I was definitely on the side of the English But Kage really was neutral all the time except during the Finnish war"

Kage interrupted. "Now, that's a slight exaggeration I couldn't say I was perfectly neutral when I read the stories of the Norwegian occupation or when the women came here from Ravensbrueck or Belsen."

"But," I persisted, "you were until then?"

"Look, I knew Germany before the war. I studied in Berlin Our books at the university were German books Our culture was German in many respects I didn't believe they were different from any other people When the trouble started there in 1932 and '33, it was their affair Who was I to tell them what was right and wrong? I came home feeling stronger than ever that we had to work hard here in Sweden to make sure that our people didn't begin to need all kinds of crazy ideas We were

too small to tell Germany what to do. I still say if the other countries had done it the whole war wouldn't have started."

"Edith, it will probably be quite shocking to you, but Kage and my brother-in-law and most of the young people I know, felt rather proud to have been able to maintain their spiritual neutrality" Kitty sounded slightly sarcastic.

"That's the thing hardest for me to understand." I spoke slowly because what I wanted to say was the thing that had been troubling me most of all and was the main point that I had to make "Here you are, a good democratic people—in many respects much more advanced than we are, with your socialized medicine and co-operative industries. And yet in the face of the greatest crisis that democracies have ever had to face, you say you were able to allow your minds to remain neutral. We in America were neutral the first two years, and President Roosevelt said the country would remain neutral, but in the same speech he said that this did not mean that people had to remain neutral in their sentiments."

Kage lit a pipe and smiled. "President Roosevelt could afford to say it. And you could afford to hate Germany. When war came, you could produce four thousand planes a month and remain unbombed three thousand miles away. Have you ever thought about that?"

"That may be so," I said with a touch of exasperation. "I don't say you should have declared war on the Germans. But how can you even admit today that you didn't really care who won? You knew what Nazism meant. You were next door to it. Didn't it at least disgust you physically?"

He smiled again with a calm condescension which intensified my exasperation. "There was propaganda on both sides. We disbelieved some and believed others. When we were called upon to act humanely, we did. When the Jews fled from Denmark, they came to Sweden."

"And when German troops had to go to Finland, they crossed through Sweden," I snapped.

He was not angry and continued calmly. "Yes, we were neutral. It was our job and is our job today."

"But how was it possible to keep from thinking?" I said almost to myself.

"If we had thought too much one way or the other, these things would not be what they are today." He looked around the room at sleeping Thomas, at Kitty sitting on the floor near the fire, and at the table covered with fruit, candies, and wine. Outside, the snow had turned to a soft blue in the darkness.

Mea Lauer came to my apartment one morning to apply for a job as maid. She was short and spongy looking. She sat in the chair shyly and looked at me through thick lenses. Her appearance was not Swedish, neither were her dress and accent. Her English was fairly good and it was obvious that she was not a professional maid. She nodded eagerly to everything I said about the job. When we had agreed that she would report to work the next morning, she rummaged through her pocketbook and then asked me to fill out a police registration card for her.

"What's that for?" I asked in surprise.

"In order to come to live in Stockholm, I have to be registered with the police and with the department of foreigners as a housemaid." She smiled. "You see, I'm one of the Bernadotte women. We can live out of the camps only if we have certain jobs. In Stockholm it's restricted to domestics."

Only a few days earlier I had been complimenting a Swedish friend who had shown me statistics on the admirable work of Count Bernadotte and his mission. Eleven thousand women had been saved from extermination or starvation by the Count's agreement with Himmler. Many more had arrived in Sweden since then from Ravensbrueck and Bergen-Belsen and other concentration camps. I heard how well they had been taken care

of by the Red Cross. It was a shock now to learn that after their cure was over, they were forced to continue living on charity in camps or were compelled to take jobs that would keep them hovering on the fringes of society itself.

She apparently misunderstood my silence and hurriedly explained "I'm all right, though, really. And I can do all the things you asked."

"I'm sure you can. I wasn't thinking of that at all. Frankly, I was curious about you."

She relaxed and looked almost square.

"Where do you come from originally?"

"From Poland—the part that is Russia now."

"I lived in Poland before the war," I said.

She looked at me curiously. "Then you know Lwow?"

"I was there once. Is that where you're from?"

She nodded. "Yes. But it's a long time ago. I graduated into Sweden through the right schools—Auschwitz, Ravensbrueck, Luebeck." She waved her hand. "Then one day came those wonderful white buses with the shiny red cross and took us to Malmo. It'll be a year in two months since then. Whenever I get angry at something here I remember those days and I feel grateful all over again."

"Have you been in a camp most of the time here?"

"Oh, no. Just the first few weeks. It was more of a hospital than a camp. I was almost blind when I got here. But they cured my eyes with vitamin injections and these." She pointed to the thick glasses.

"What did you do when you left the hospital?"

She laughed happily. "Just rested and rested. It was good then. We didn't have to do anything. I slept and ate and slept and ate. I gained forty pounds in two months. Most of us did and we still eat all the time." She pinched her arm. "This fat, you see, is not normal and no matter how hard I work it remains." She laughed.

"Have you been doing housework ever since?"

"No. I went to work in a factory near the camp but I got tired of the camp atmosphere. I discovered after a while that none of my family was left in Poland and so there was no point in my returning there. I couldn't go back to my home town because it's part of the Soviet Union, so I would have to go to some other city, and I'd be just as much of a stranger there as I am here."

"So you've decided to stay in Sweden?"

"Yes and no. I did in the beginning. It was wonderful. But I don't like the idea of remaining a housemaid the rest of my life and so far I see no other hope. I suppose it's sinful to talk like this after all that has happened. But I was a lawyer once and I had a husband, a child, a good home and a career. I couldn't expect Count Bernadotte to return all this to me. There is nothing much I could expect of people any more, anyhow. Sweden has done more than her share. But there are some things like a home and so on that she can't give you." She stared at me with her shortsighted eyes but looked neither angry nor protesting. She rose abruptly and added "I'm sorry. Perhaps you understand. I'll be here tomorrow at nine o'clock." She walked quickly to the door.

She came to work the next morning with a large paper suitcase. Mme Gylling put her head out of the back room and then came to greet her.

"So you are the new maid. Madame has told me about you. I'll show you to your room."

I had never seen Mme. Gylling so authoritative. Her bony figure seemed taller and the strange eyes were fixed steadily on the plump, short Mrs. Lauer.

"That's all right, Mme Gylling. I'll show Mrs. Lauer to her room."

Mme Gylling smiled benignly. "Certainly, madame. I just thought you had other things to do."

Mrs. Lauer unpacked her suitcase in the tiny room off the kitchen. There were a dress, a few undershirts, some pajamas and books—Swedish readers, dictionaries, some Polish classics and a thick pile of old newspapers and magazines. She looked up from the bed she was making.

"I am not caught up yet on what really went on in the world. You know, when we first came to Sweden and saw a newspaper, although it was Swedish and we couldn't understand it, the women fought over it the way we used to fight over a turnip in camp. When I finally got to Gothenberg I went to the library and started to read the newspapers since 1941. I used to go there every evening but I never got beyond that year. Then I started collecting old magazines and newspapers wherever I came across them. It's fun to create now a picture of the outside world while we were out of it. I suppose I need five more years to get caught up and then I still won't understand what really happened." She threw her arms out in a wide gesture.

"I don't think any of us knows what really happened, Mrs. Lauer."

She straightened and kept looking at me as if she were thinking of something else. "I don't know how I can explain it," she said. "My friends and I talk about it all the time. I mean my camp friends. There is a special feeling. A tiny little thing, which I don't think anybody else can understand. Let me see if I can tell you what it is. You see, while we were there, we thought that what happened to us had happened to the whole world. We just decided, I suppose, inside ourselves that everybody was living in a camp the way we were. We knew probably that that wasn't so but we forgot it. We gradually forgot that there were any other people in the world except two kinds, the condemned and the Nazis. If this wasn't so, we felt, how could it drag on for so long. We gave up all hope and understood at last that for us it was either the gas chamber or work until we fell."

She paused and looked at me to see if I was getting her point and then she continued "And so you see later when it was all over and we read in the old newspapers that so much which had nothing to do with us had actually gone on in the world while we were in the camps, that we were just a small unimportant incident compared to all the invasions, battles, conferences, speeches—when we saw how far removed we were from the daily normal lives of the Swedes, the Americans, even the British and all the others—we just got very confused. My friends always say that the only people we will ever be able to live with comfortably, or talk to, knowing that we'll be understood, are other camp people like ourselves." She looked up at me with deep concern and I could see that she did not believe that I could have grasped her point. Then she smiled and added "Maybe they're right. Maybe we are different."

I could see nothing different on the surface in Mrs Lauer. She fixed up her room with curtains and flowers and got a bookcase to hold her books and magazines and the old newspapers, and put on the dresser a faded photograph of herself and a man walking in a park. She went about her household duties cheerfully, singing Ukrainian folk songs to herself. She often came into the living room with a lively bounce to ask boldly if she could borrow a book and, when I nodded, she took not one but four or five under her arm and carted them off into her room to make her bookcase look fuller. The only time she seemed to be nervous or disturbed was when Mme Gylling was in the room. The latter followed her about the house and ordered her to polish the silver or sweep the back staircase.

One morning when I was dressing, Mme Gylling came into my bedroom. I disliked and distrusted my landlady so completely since the conversation I had had with her at breakfast, that I hardly ever spoke to her. When she wished me a soft good morning, I answered her curtly and asked what she wanted.

"I just wonder about your maid, Mrs Sulkin. I've just had to tell her to work more and read less. It's quite outrageous the way she sits in that room of hers and reads while the beds are not yet made. After all, she's in Sweden and in Sweden a maid has her resting hours and her working hours. Between seven in the morning and seven at night her time isn't her own but yours" I continued combing my hair and wished she'd stop talking, but she stood by the window twisting the fringes of a dark shawl

"I know a Finnish girl who's out of a job now. She was working for one of the embassies. She'd be delighted to come and work here. She's an expert cook and cleans well."

"Thank you, Mme Gylling, I am very pleased with Mrs. Lauer." I tried to seem as calm as I could.

She smiled and started moving toward the door. "You understand that I have only your interests at heart. Of course I must think of the quality of the person living in my house and handling my china and all the valuable pieces in my living room, you understand, don't you?"

Mrs Lauer had a few friends who came to visit her occasionally in the evening. One of them was a Polish gynecologist, a small woman with a straight boyish haircut. She always carried a briefcase containing notebooks and newspapers and talked with an air of continuous excitement as if she had the hope that something great was about to happen to her any day. She had apparently been quite famous in Poland before the war, later at Auschwitz and Ravensbrueck she had worked feverishly among the women, administering stolen medicine to the sick and nursing the dying and the tortured. I used to sit with her and talk in Polish. She spent every morning studying Swedish and English but was so preoccupied with medical thoughts that her mind refused to grasp the languages. One night she came flushed with excitement and paced up and down our living room floor.

"They have given me a permit to work in the laboratory of

one of the large hospitals," she announced, shaking her head as if she couldn't believe it "They really are wonderful, these hospitals in Sweden" She ran her fingers through her straight hair and paced the floor with short, nervous steps "It's a big move forward I'll be inside a hospital again" She switched from Polish to a mixture of Swedish and English and then back to Polish again, apologizing profusely. "This head won't take languages I get excited and I can't even speak Polish, never mind another tongue What do I care?" She opened her mouth in a wide grin "There is talk of admitting fifty refugee doctors to the Swedish medical association Maybe they'll take me in"

The hospital she had mentioned was the one in which Kage Rimer worked and one day I asked him what the chances were of her becoming a doctor in Sweden

He shrugged his shoulders "We have a few of them in the laboratories now and they're good I don't know, it may take years The government will have to pass a special bill entitling noncitizens to practice medicine or they'll have to become Swedish subjects and that takes years I wish they would let some of them work in the hospital We have a terrific shortage of doctors" He looked at me apologetically "Well, what can we do? That's the way it is"

Two of Mrs Lauer's friends were sisters from Hungary. They had apparently been fashion designers of some reputation in Budapest They were now employed as house seamstresses on a large estate near Stockholm and were waiting for permission to open a dressmaking salon in the city. While they waited, they sewed spring costumes for Mrs Lauer and the other *Lager Freunde*, as they called each other.

Occasionally, the whole group of them came together at our apartment It was a strange reunion Like sorority alumnae, they exchanged gossip about the various people they had known in the camp, they casually referred to "the day before Halina and her group were gassed," or "it was the Friday after the

Hungarian transport left for Bergen-Belsen." If one of them had received a letter from a survivor who was now in Paris or had returned to Poland or Hungary, she read it aloud, laughing and sighing. The future was nothing to them, and except for incidents like the doctor's sudden change of status, they never talked about it. They all studied Swedish assiduously but were still just as removed from Sweden itself as when they had first come to the country. They never discussed politics or the world. They seemed to have no other friends and I had the feeling that although they might have at one time tried to make some, they had given up and didn't want any now. They felt the way Mrs. Lauer did, that only those who had been "there" could understand their language.

One afternoon Mrs. Lauer and I went shopping. It was a beautiful day, clear and frosty, and as usual we exchanged comments about the brilliance and cleanliness of the city. It was pleasant to shop in the shiny white *Konsums*, the food co-operatives which looked more like laboratories or pharmacies than grocery stores. The sales girls wore starched aprons and had scrubbed, smiling faces. The meats and fish lay in neat piles inside modern glass freezers. A few women looked at us questioningly the way people usually do at anyone speaking a foreign language. Mrs. Lauer stared at the meats and hundreds of cans and huge cheeses and whispered under her breath, "*Boze Kochany*" which is "Dear God!" in Polish.

"I still don't believe it. Every time I see all this I say to myself, 'It can't be true.'" She laughed good-naturedly.

The attendant waited patiently as she explained in studied Swedish what we wanted.

When we left the store she asked me, "Did you see how they looked at us, Mrs. Sulkin? I was glad I was with you and we spoke English. I heard one of the women say we were *Amerikans a Kvinnoz*—American women. If I had been there alone, I would have thought they were staring at me, or maybe laughing

at me and saying 'She's one of the *fluktigaz*.' " She paused "I wouldn't mind it so much. But they somehow seem to consider only us, and not the others, refugees. And you know how full Stockholm is of Finns and Balts and lots of others, too—shady people like Mme Gylling "

It was the first time I had heard her refer to Mme Gylling. "Who do you suppose Mme Gylling is?" I asked.

"It's perfectly clear to me. It was clear from the second I saw her. She is a German Nazi no matter what she tells you. She told me she was born in Czechoslovakia. Maybe she's a Sudeten German, but there is no doubt about her being a Nazi. I didn't have to talk to her to know. We can smell them and she knows it. That's why she hates me so "

One day we got a new apartment and decided to move immediately. Mme Gylling smiled politely when I told her the news and wished me luck. Kitty Rimer came down to the new flat to help us prepare it, while Mrs Lauer stayed behind to finish packing. No sooner did we arrive at the new flat than the telephone rang. It was Mme Gylling. Her voice was sharp and precise. "Mrs Sulkin, I'm calling to tell you that I've just had your maid arrested "

I thought I hadn't heard her correctly. "Did you say arrested? What do you mean?"

She cut in abruptly. "Just as I had suspected. The woman is nothing but a common thief. I called the local policewoman and made her open the bag . . ."

I didn't wait for any more but slammed down the receiver, motioned to the others, and hurried out to find a taxi.

A small crowd had gathered in front of the Gylling door when we arrived. Mrs Lauer, in her white work uniform, her thick lenses askew, was being pushed toward a police car by a woman in civilian clothes. Her face was blotchy and she was crying hysterically in a mixture of Polish, English, and Swedish, "I can't be arrested—it's this woman, not me—her." One of the

policemen took her arm and tried to quiet her. "Call Mrs. Sülkin—she'll tell you—they're Americans"

Mme Gylling stood erect in the doorway She had dressed herself in a high fur hat, a long dark coat with a fur collar, and a fur muff. Her green eyes looked straight at me For the first time since I had met her they did not wander off as I caught her gaze. Her lips were pursed and as I approached, they opened into the semblance of a smile, but it was not the usual humble smile of Mme Gylling, the landlady. This was Mme Gylling, the lady. As if to confirm my impression, she turned to the policewoman who was asking a question

"My full name is Mme Councillor Hjalmar Irene Gylling. The Councillor isn't here now. He's recovering from an operation in a sanitarium near Stockholm."

"Mme. Gylling, what is it all about?" I asked when she finished

"There is nothing to worry about now, Mrs Sülkin" She smiled her old smile and looked away "I caught the girl stealing. I was telling the police lady that I don't understand why these people are allowed to stay in Sweden But it'll all be cleared up at the police station I'll see you there."

It was cleared up at the police station It appeared that Mme. Gylling had seen Mrs Lauer pack away one of her small powder boxes which had stood on my dresser She had allowed her to go on with the packing, meanwhile calling the police to tell them that she had caught a thief in the act. When they arrived Mme Gylling pointed to the closed suitcase. The evidence was there.

The case was dismissed soon enough But it had a profound effect on Mrs. Lauer Later, in her room, she tried to explain why she had not been able to calm down easily. "What hurts so is that one thinks one is human again and then all the old things come back You're nothing once more I couldn't even say that I hadn't done it The degradation of it is something

you'll never understand There she was with that smile of hers telling the policewoman, 'Here she is, open her bag.' I stopped thinking It was a Nazi and me No matter what I said I was guilty It didn't matter that it was Sweden They were standing above me taking me away

"What hurts most of all"—she paused to think about this for a moment before she said it—"what hurts most of all is that I didn't even expect to have anyone ask me whether I was guilty or not. What did it matter what I said, I thought Mme Gylling would win in any case They would stamp my papers and I would become an undesirable refugee. A week from now I'd be on the go again A DP camp in Germany, or somewhere on the Polish border"

I knew that the incident was exaggerated in her mind, that the police measures and tortures she was thinking about no longer existed But the fact did exist that Mme Gylling had two hours earlier scored a victory over her, that if we hadn't been there she might have been convicted of stealing and branded an undesirable refugee There was little doubt that the law would have been on the side of Mme Gylling for she, after all, was not merely a refugee maid in Sweden, but Mme Councillor Hjalmar Irene Gylling

There was nothing I could do during the next few days to help Mrs Lauer. The past had come rushing in on her and had defeated the present. She was silent and nervous and I felt that she no longer trusted me either She did her work and read her books and went to the movies once a week She avoided talk and contact with us The jovial friendliness had gone out of her. There was suspicion in her eyes always, toward everyone, and the only time I saw it disappear was when she opened the door and saw that it was not Kitty or one of us, but the Polish doctor or the Hungarian girls

I grew impatient with Sweden Perhaps it was Mea Lauer

and the outside world she brought with her that caused it. Perhaps it was the neutrality malaise or the charity, carefully recorded in statistics which were impressive, true, but cold

Perhaps it was just the telephone book in which one found a listing not so much by knowing a man's name as by knowing his occupation. He was not someone but something, he was "engineer," "student," "bookseller's assistant," "carpenter," "painter," "publisher," and was usually addressed as such and was seated at dinner tables accordingly. It was the annoyance of finding a modern social democracy burdened with the anachronism of classes—there were classes of people, classes of clothes, classes of restaurants, and they never seemed to meet. With Germanic *Buergerlichkeit*, the Swede enjoyed having everything and everyone, including himself, in the right place.

People assumed the humility of their positions and required the humility of those below them. The woman who watched the outside door of our apartment house bowed deferentially before us with a self-abasement that would have been impossible in her counterpart, the hard-bitten Parisian concierge. On the other hand, she had less trouble than her French opposite number with the delivery man or the garbage collector, for they readily accepted her authority. This was probably one of the reasons why I never heard an exchange of curses between truck drivers and taxi drivers on the streets of Stockholm, for in the hierarchy of authority, each knew his place.

Karin, my husband's secretary, who had been hired on the basis of her university degrees and ten years of experience, having once clarified in her own mind that her position was that of secretary, ceased being a person and became a title. In the presence of her employer she stood at attention, paid strict heed to his every word, and requested permission to ask a question. Over her inferiors she exerted a clear-cut, precise authority. The office boy addressed her, and was addressed in turn, in the third person and by title.

For Karin life had a specific shape and circumference. She wore long-sleeved blouses and straight skirts to the office. She knew exactly what the limits of her duties and her salary would be and to what employee benefits she was entitled. In this ordered life she felt content and secure. When I once suggested that we go to lunch at a little beer hall around the corner, where I knew the food to be good, she calmly replied: "But here in Sweden only chauffeurs go to a place like this," and led me to a restaurant the same size a few blocks away where the menu was much the same but where the people were of her own class.

A student at the university stood erect when a professor spoke to him and seldom argued or questioned his teacher's thesis. At the University of Uppsala, Professor Kenneth Murdock of Harvard caused a stir one day by telling his students to remain seated when he entered the room. Later, when he suggested visiting a student's flat for tea and discussion, Stockholm newspapers carried the story as an exciting news item. When I spoke to one of the students he was deeply disturbed. He bit his lip and shook his head. "Here in Sweden we're not used to thinking of a professor as someone to just come and talk to. Ever since Professor Murdock came, we all seem to have many more problems."

What had happened to the student of Uppsala was that his strictly categorized world had crumbled, he had lost the security which he found in being the member of a groove of society in which he was given a specific set of functions, privileges, and customs beyond which it never occurred to him to look. I wondered if this was true of all of Sweden.

Eskilstuna, a city of about fifty thousand people, lay an hour and a half by train from Stockholm. We were visiting a friend of my husband's, one of the editors of a well-known Swedish liberal newspaper.

Redaktor Verinelin received us in his cubbyhole office in a dilapidated building. He was a tall stoop-shouldered man with angular features and long nervous hands. When he spoke, his arms swung in wide arcs as if he were constantly aware that although his words and his newspaper writings emanated from a small city, they were meant to apply to all of Sweden.

Almost immediately on our arrival he rose from his desk and slipped on a coat. "I'm glad you were able to get here in time," he said. "I have an appointment with the chairman of the city council and I think it'll interest you to come along."

We walked down a well-worn, sagging wooden floor past a row of tiny offices similar to his own. Stacks of old newspapers, used carbon sheets, magazines, teletype copy and frayed almanacs cluttered up each desk we saw.

"This is nothing like a New York newspaper office, is it?" Verinelin laughed. "In Stockholm they're much fancier too. I suppose you've seen the offices of the *Dagens Nyheter* there. They do newspapering in the American big business manner. Here in Eskilstuna, we're much smaller. But our paper," he added proudly, "which is Independent Liberal, reaches about 80 per cent of the households in the city. It's also read in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo, and we feel that in our way we have some influence on the country at large."

"I understand that your paper was very influential during the war. It was one of the famous anti-Nazi papers, wasn't it?" I asked.

"Yes. The Gothenburg *Handelstidningen*, the Eskilstuna *Kuriren* and the *Dagens Nyheter* led the fight, and it wasn't easy." He paused in the doorway and said sternly, "It is my opinion that Sweden was lucky to have had some who did dare to raise their voices publicly against the Nazis."

We walked toward the city hall. In the pale sun, the buildings looked mellow with age. Unlike Stockholm, there was no glitter of modernity here. Many of the streets were still cobble-

stoned, there were no neon signs, hardly any automobiles. It was the middle of a working day but the city was quiet, and although we knew it to be a famous steel and metal town, there were none of the noises, none of the griminess, that one finds in such towns in America and England. Here and there a woman or man with a weather-beaten face cycled down the road carrying a bundle or two, or a child, on the handlebars. Through store windows we could see women in sheepskin and rabbitskin coats standing before counters which, while perhaps not as streamlined as those in Stockholm, were as clean.

"Eskilstuna was not as quiet as this a year ago," Veinelin commented. "For about six months these streets were full of men on strike. You might have heard of it," he went on. "It was a national strike of metal workers and lasted from February to July. When it was all over, the workers here realized that it had not been worth it."

"It was a strike for higher wages, wasn't it?"

"Yes. But it was more than that. You know we don't usually have many strikes here in Sweden but this time there was widespread discontent."

"I suppose the usual thing," Sidney put in. "A wartime rise in prices but not enough of a compensating rise in wages."

"That's just it. Prices did go up. More than 100 per cent in clothing, food and other essentials, but wages went up only halfway to meet the rise in the cost of living. There was another important point, too, although it was not an issue in the strike. That was the housing problem. Nearly 80 per cent of the families here in Eskilstuna, families of two, three, and sometimes five members, live in one room and a kitchen."

"That doesn't sound much like what is generally known about Sweden's new modern housing developments," I said.

Veinelin laughed. "No, indeed. We still have a long way to go. But we're tackling these problems"—he laughed again—"and

sometimes muddling through them. The man we're about to talk to will tell you something about it."

The town hall was a three-story yellow brick building. We found the official in a spacious modern office at the end of a long black-marble hall. He smiled with broad friendliness and my first impression was that he looked like an Italian music teacher. Steel-gray hair grew thickly from the back half of his head, the front part was bumpy and bald.

Vennelin's conversation with him dealt with the housing problem. It appeared that Eskilstuna had lately begun a large project. Forty million Swedish crowns were to be spent to build new apartment houses at the edge of the city. We went into an adjoining room to look at an elaborate scale model of the project. It spread across a table that ran the length of the room. The official, poised a pencil in his fingers, hopped about with obvious pleasure explaining the advantages of the plan.

"It is the biggest project being carried out anywhere in Sweden," he declared. "There will be a cinema. You can see it here." He rested the point of his pencil on the tiny replica of a movie house. "There will be gardens, shopping centers, garages, a playground for children—" His pencil darted back and forth.

"Will this solve the whole problem?"

"You mean the overpopulation of the city?" the head of the city council queried. "Yes, to a great extent."

"In other words, families will not have to live in one room and a kitchen when this is ready," I pursued.

He shrugged. "Not exactly. During the war this city, like every other city in Sweden, became overpopulated. That was because our production rose so rapidly. This development will take care of most of the excess population and, of course, it's a great improvement because, as you can see for yourself, most of the buildings in Eskilstuna are old. This will be modern, neat, and clean."

"But I still don't understand," Sidney said. "Do you mean

that most of the families in the city, the workers' families, will have to continue living in one room and a kitchen? Won't they get priorities to move in here?"

Veimelin laughed. "That's just the question I've been asking, Mr. Sulkın. I've been going over the figures recently and I can't see how any of the workers in the city will be able to move into this new development. First of all, it looks as though the projected scale of rents will be too high, and secondly, I think the houses are being built just a little bit outside the town."

"Then who will live there?" I asked.

Veimelin replied quickly, "There'll be plenty of people—businessmen, white-collar workers, and many of the factory men in the higher wage brackets. But as far as I can see, it won't solve the town's basic housing problem, and that is how to raise the living conditions of the bulk of the families here."

The official put his hand on Veimelin's shoulder. "You have what makes a good newspaper story, and since your paper represents the opposition, I won't spoil your fun. It's just interesting to note that there is a national bill for the improvement of housing conditions up in Stockholm and it's your Liberal party that's opposing it."

They both laughed good-naturedly as we took our leave.

At lunch in the city's one sizable hotel, overlooking a placid lake, Veimelin spoke about his party and paper.

"The Liberal party, I can say, was the most actively anti-Nazi party in Sweden during the war."

"I must admit that it was surprising to me," I put in, and Sidney picked it up. "We naturally expected that the strongest anti-Nazi attitude would be found in the Labor party. After all, the labor unions in Sweden did throw Nazis out in 1936."

The editor smiled. "Yes, but you see, although it was a coalition government, the Labor party was the main element in it. It had to please the King, the Conservatives and the people, if it wanted to win the postwar elections." He shook his head.

slowly. "But you can't really speak about it in terms of parties. Most of the political leaders in Sweden and the people in general have what I think is pretty much of a social-democratic outlook. They're so materialistic that they seldom think in terms of ideologies or ideals. You can see this attitude in most of what they do. They always seem to be looking for the well-known 'middle way' and sometimes they're so completely lost in the middle that the result is a half measure—like this housing project—and yet it costs a great deal of money."

"It seems to me that you sound less like a member of the 'middle way' than like a member of the far left," Sidney said, laughing.

He nodded. "That's a fallacy which is current in many parts of the world. Too many people think that it's only the extreme left or the extreme right that can fight or crusade. If you look at the activities of our small group during the war, you'll see what I mean. In a sense, we were the Swedish underground. In Stockholm, in Gothenburg, and here in Eskilstuna, we used to meet often to plan attacks on the Nazis. Many of us were arrested or silenced for opposing the government's neutrality policy. Our newspapers were often confiscated because we were not neutral.

"There was one episode, however, in which we scored an important victory. It was when we received a collection of eyewitness reports from Norway describing German torture methods. We had these reports checked at the Norwegian legation and notarized as true and then, although our paper received them first, we arranged for sixteen other Swedish papers to publish them simultaneously with us. Of course, when the stories appeared, the government sent its policemen out to confiscate them all. In fact, a local detective whom I knew very well came up to my office and spent more time apologizing for what he was about to do than he spent searching for the paper. But we had expected this and had distributed the paper earlier

than usual Besides, hundreds of copies had been sent the night before to Denmark and Norway by underground courier "

"I suppose there was much more that hasn't yet come out into the open "

"Yes, it's still kept underground, though most of it is known and a lot will be published soon Liberal editors in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and here formed men's clubs and met with members of Allied governments and the Danish and Norwegian resistance. We had a regular channel of communications with our sister countries, and many a Dane or Norwegian would have a beard or a toupee put on right in the offices of the *Kuriren* in order to cross the border illegally. The Liberal party had a weekly publication in which a few leading Stockholm publishers, lawyers and men of the other professions exposed the government's dirty deals and revealed conditions in occupied countries "

"I should suppose that the government would have looked at your activities through half-closed eyes "

He shook his head "Unfortunately, I must confess—and it's difficult for me as a Swede to confess—that our government did not " He was angry. "They arrested our colleagues, gagged us and were much more worried about us than about the Swedish Nazis *Dagsposten* and other German-financed publications were hardly ever suspended while the organs of the far left were banned and our Independent Liberal press was closely guarded "

He sat in silence for a moment As he spoke, it had occurred to me that what had annoyed me about Sweden was that until I met him I had met no one—with the exception of a single publisher in Stockholm—who had spoken about the war, or for that matter about anything, with true, full-hearted excitement.

"Now that you have had time to think about the whole thing," Sidney asked, "who would you blame it all on?"

Veimelin took a deep breath "Well, let's start at the top King Gustav is a tired old man and he wanted peace at all costs

Unfortunately, he didn't realize what the cost might be." There was a sad respect in his voice. "No doubt you remember the infamous incident which occurred in 1941 when the Germans presented ten demands to the government. The government intended to turn them all down but the King threatened to abdicate unless we made some compromise with the Germans. As a result, the Engelbrecht division was permitted to pass through our country to Finland in contravention of our neutrality. Then there was the army, many of the middle officers were strongly pro-German, even if one couldn't call them Nazis. And the industrialists who were able to influence the government because our wartime economy depended on them. And, of course, the extreme conservatism and the anti-Russian bias of the foreign minister at that time, Christian Gunther. They were the causes "

Veinelin lighted a cigarette. "But above all, the real cause was the caution of the Labor party. Their fear of losing material gains—what they like to call 'our achievement.' " His tone was sharply mocking.

"Isn't this caution a quality of all Swedes?" I asked.

He nodded. "Yes The Swedes are cautious—like good shoppers. They bought a high civilization for themselves and they've been relatively comfortable longer than any other nation. They've had no minority problems, no territorial problems, no internal strife in their recent history. They were lucky enough to be permitted to go on shopping for a long time. Just as they know how to buy quality suits so they will wear well, in the same way they choose a quality government which will preserve their security and comfort at all cost. They bought the friendship of Germany and the Allies. It's in the blood and you can't change it."

"And yet you say there were some who abandoned that caution," I said "How about a town like this? Did your activities get much support from the people here?"

"Well." He smiled broadly. "As usual, there are two answers to that question I'm sure that most of the people in Eskilstuna were for the Allies. But the second answer is that they're Swedes and they will not commit themselves publicly on anything."

Sidney and I joined in his laughter. And Sidney exclaimed, "The longer one stays in Sweden the more inscrutable the Swede."

Verinelin shook his head. "We're not as complicated as we seem. It's just that most of us have little to say. If you're here in the spring, you'll get a clue to our character. You'll see how well our eyes match our lakes. They are both pale blue and never ruffled by storms."

Later in the evening, before we left Eskilstuna, Sidney and I were seated at a plain round wooden table in the home of a metal worker named Gunnar Halstrom. We had dropped in to deliver the regards of a friend of his in Stockholm. Metal Worker Halstrom, his wife Christina, and their eighteen-year-old son, sat stiffly at the table. The floor was bare but scrubbed and varnished. Along one wall stood a drab studio couch, a leather chair and lamp filled the corner of the room, and opposite stood a combination bureau and dish closet. Through the open door we could see the rest of the apartment which consisted of a kitchen and a tiny breakfast room. This was the space in which the three of them lived.

With them this evening was a factory colleague, Worker Thomas Holm. He was a filer of steel, a highly skilled job.

Our unexpected arrival had caught them so completely unawares that for a long while they simply sat in silence. It was not until we mentioned visiting the chairman of the town council and discussing the new housing project with him that we elicited a spark of response.

"Holm was a member of the housing committee," Halstrom remarked. "He represented the union."

Holm, a square-shouldered, powerfully built man with broad dark hands, smiled. "It'll be a big job, this development. I don't know whether they'll be able to get enough workers to do it."

"Do you and your family intend to move into it?" I asked.

He shrugged his heavy shoulders "It would be nice but I think it's too expensive"

Halstrom nodded. "Holm lives in a flat like this now It costs him nine hundred kronor a year and it's too much In the new buildings, he'd have to pay fifteen hundred kronor, right?" He turned his thin yellowish face to the other man

"Yaha, they don't allow more than two people to live in one room there, and three rooms are fifteen hundred kronor We would have to take the three-room flat then because we are four Right here in Eskilstuna we can live in one room no matter how many people we are, for nine hundred," he explained.

"When you were on the committee, did you make any suggestions so that some of you could move into the new houses?" Sidney asked

"Yes I told them to abandon the rule restricting two people to a room and to build more one-room apartments"

Sidney caught my eye and smiled This was that odd Swedish character again. I knew that up in Stockholm hundreds of large families were living in tiny one- and two-room flats They weren't called slums because they looked so clean from the outside. And some of the famous co-operative houses that I had seen had perpetuated the same queer principle—they were shiny, modern but thoroughly inconvenient.

Mrs. Halstrom was watching the two men and listening carefully. She was plump, with a chubby red face and turned-up nose. "Thomas, what will the new apartments be like? Did you see pictures of them on the plans?"

"Oh, yes, they're modern and light and nice"

She pushed out her lower lip "I guess when they're finished and lived in a bit they won't be much different from any others

You know the Svensons—their son works for ASEA* and the co-operative houses there aren't anything to dream about. Why, the walls are thin and it all looks shaky. It's no bigger than what we have here. They have two rooms but much smaller. It's newer and cleaner. But this at least has solid walls and floors." She looked around.

Sidney turned to Holm. "We've heard from several people in town that there might be another strike."

Holm nodded his head. "We've been asking for an increase in the whole metal industry. If we don't get it, it's possible there'll be a strike."

"It won't help you any, just as the other didn't," Mrs. Halstrom shook her head gravely.

Halstrom looked at his wife and resumed an argument which he had no doubt had many times with her.

"You always say that, Christina, and I keep telling you that you're right. The first strike was too early. We don't expect to have to strike again, but we think the company should pay higher wages."

Mrs. Halstrom continued to shake her head, unconvinced. "In that last strike there was no work for six months and we're still paying off our debts. If the boy weren't working, I don't know what we'd do. If he gets married and goes to live with his wife I don't know how we can support this house."

Holm winked at the young boy across the table. "Is it the young Jonson girl, Gustav?"

The boy rose, blushing, and lit a cigarette. He was tall and thin in his blue overalls and wooden shoes.

"He has time," his father said. "Gustav, bring out some schnapps and potatoes for our visitors." The boy disappeared behind the door.

* ASEA (Allmanna Svenska Elektriska Aktiebolaget), Swedish equivalent of the General Electric Company.

"The young people are not hurrying into marriage these days the way they used to," Holm commented.

"In general they're different these days," Mrs Halstrom continued "I spoke to the priest the other day and he said that all during the war and ever since there is much more drinking going on I don't know where they get the schnapps with the *systemet* being as strict as it is, but they apparently do. Mr. Sundin also said that many more children are being born out of wedlock than ever before and nobody even knows who the father is."

"Yes, you hear the men at the plant who have daughters talk about it Holm, you and I wouldn't know about it, being fathers of sons," Halstrom said

The boy reappeared carrying a tray with a bottle of *aquavit* and some small glasses. Mrs Halstrom went into the kitchen and a moment later returned with a plate of steaming potatoes and a dish of herring Her husband poured out the schnapps as she served the food.

Worker Halstrom finally lifted his glass and made the traditional speech. "I would like to say to our guests from Stockholm and America that they are always welcome here in Eskilstuna. We hope we have not given them a bad impression by complaining about our lot. Truly, we do not have any serious complaints and we hope our guests will not think too badly of us for speaking as we did this evening Skål."

The Lost Years

N O R W A Y

MRS. BERGEN ACCEPTED a cigarette and sat in one of the worn club chairs near the pot-bellied stove which was eagerly burning the last pile of firewood I had put into it early in the morning. There were no more logs in the basket next to it I had used them all up during the night, hopping out of bed every half hour to feed the stove in the hope that it would raise, if only slightly, the zero temperature of the room

I hadn't been completely warm since crossing the Swedish border into Norway a week earlier. The temperature of the train had changed suddenly after we stopped for a few moments at the small border station of Charlottenburg. It had been stuffy and overheated until then, the way most trains are, and so the change had been pleasant at first. But as we traveled farther into Norway the temperature of the car fell steadily toward zero. I asked the conductor whether anything had gone wrong with the heating system. He shook his head. "No, madame, we're out of Sweden now and there is just one coal car on this train—enough to take us to the Swedish-Norwegian border. After that there is no heating at all because we have no coal in Norway."

There was no resentment in his voice nor did the other pas-

sengers on the train show surprise. Apparently they had all been aware of this fact and accepted it without comment or question. As a matter of fact, the cold did not seem to affect their good spirits at all. They laughed and tramped up and down the narrow corridors conversing with raucous good humor. I gathered that they were mostly Norwegians returning after a brief trip to Stockholm. They talked happily about the good time they had had and smacked their lips over the food they had eaten. Each of them had a square carton of the twenty-five pounds of food which were allowed out of Sweden, he kept it by his side and guarded it more carefully than the rest of his luggage.

Mrs. Bergen watched me shiver in my heavy clothes. "It's so much harder for you than it is for us," she said. "I was thinking about it last night when I went to bed. I wish we could get a little more wood for your room. Maybe we can today."

It had been the same with other Norwegians I had met since my arrival. They all apologized for the physical discomforts as if they were not bothered by them and I was the only one affected. Indeed, that seemed to be the case. Here I was all wrapped up and still cold while Mrs. Bergen sat quite relaxed smoking a cigarette. And yet I thought that she must be cold. Her hands were bluish red and the tip of her nose looked as if she had been out in the frost all day. Her daughter, Ingeborg, who had helped clean the room in the morning, had also looked frozen. Yet they had both shown the same pleasant humor. Mrs. Bergen smiled her friendly smile at me now.

"One always realizes how much colder and more uncomfortable it is for someone who isn't used to it. In America and Sweden, it's probably always warm, and if it isn't, you can jump into a hot bath or put on an electric heater. I wish we had one to put in your room." She drew on her cigarette with obvious pleasure. "We don't mind it so much. After six years, you get

used to it and it's much better now than it used to be. At least there is food and that keeps you warm."

There was no hopelessness in her voice. She had meant it sincerely when she said there was plenty of food, and no doubt she had felt sorry for me when she served me a piece of whale's meat swimming in fish oil together with a slice of black bread for breakfast.

I knew from Sidney, who had stayed with Mrs. Bergen before and who had given me her address, that she had not lived like this nor rented rooms before the occupation. I could also tell this from her finely carved features and straight bearing, and from the excellent hand-embroidered sheets and pillow cases which she gave her boarders. No doubt her apartment had looked quite different before. It was situated in a good section of Oslo, up the hill beyond the Palace. But the building now looked sick, as did all the others in the city. Its yellowish-brown stucco was streaked with the stains of rainwater and melted ice. Inside, the wallpaper peeled in every room and the bathroom and kitchen begged for paint.

The apartment was large but was given over to boarders now, except for two rooms—Mrs. Bergen with her two daughters and son lived in one of them. Twelve-year-old Trygve slept on a folding bed behind a Japanese screen, the girls slept on studio couches, and Mrs. Bergen had her own heavy bed with its high lace-edged pillows. There was an upright piano on which the younger daughter, Ingeborg, practiced with her mother every afternoon. There were china cabinets, bookcases, some good etchings on the walls, a case of music albums, and dozens of other items pointing to a musical past. This room, Mrs. Bergen told me, had once been the library in which her husband worked.

The other room was an ice-cold parlor with very little furniture except for another piano and a few chairs. I was under the impression that it was never used until one night I heard the

sounds of a piano, a violin, and a flute coming from it as I entered the house. When the playing stopped, Mrs. Bergen knocked on my door and invited me into the parlor to listen to what she called a bit of "home music."

About ten chairs stood side by side facing toward Ingeborg who sat at the piano. Karin, her older sister, tuned a violin while Trygve shook the saliva out of his flute. Mrs. Bergen wore powder on her cheeks and a thin coat of lipstick on her mouth. She had combed her hair out loosely, making it look much brighter than usual. A delicate old pin held a silk scarf around her neck.

The guests were all Norwegian and it was obvious that there was no formality in them. A young woman in high boots and heavy sweater pulled up a chair and took over the introductions. "Sit down here. My name is Elisabeth Hauff." She stretched out a firm hand and named the others near me. "I'll introduce you to the rest later," she whispered. "The Bergens are getting ready to play again."

The Bergen children played a Schumann trio well. There was no virtuosity in any of them, but it was evident that they enjoyed their music and their instruments. The audience enjoyed it, too. They leaned back smiling and nodding their heads. A gray-haired gentleman in wing collar and black suit tapped his fingers on the arm of his chair. When it was over they clapped enthusiastically and shook hands with the performers, who were neither shy nor conceited.

The only obviously nervous person was Mrs. Bergen. She spoke to each of the guests individually, brought out a decanter of wine and some fishpaste sandwiches, and smiled with obvious pleasure. She enjoyed being a hostess.

Elisabeth Hauff turned a friendly face toward me. "We've been coming to the Bergens' on Thursdays for these musical evenings ever since I was this high." She held her palm out a foot

above the floor "They're all talented The whole family is musical and we Norwegians love music"

"Does Mrs Bergen play?" I asked

"Oh, yes She's a fine pianist In the old days she played quite a lot, usually alone but sometimes with Mr. Bergen He was a wonderful man He didn't like to play so much himself but he used to say that he was better in theory than practice. You know he was professor of harmony at the University"

The wine had warmed everyone. Ingeborg went from one to the other, curtsying to some of the older people, smiling at the others She was at the gangling age when her arms looked too long and her legs never seemed to end in the heavy dark stockings When she came to offer me one of the sandwiches, I complimented her on her playing and she replied in stiff school English "I must have more practice I must play"—she thought a moment for the word—"much" She laughed and ran her fingers across an imaginary keyboard in the air.

"I hear you practice every day with your mother"

She shook her head "Not enough But I am—what do you say?" she paused again for a word

"Lazy," Elisabeth Hauff inserted, putting her arm on the girl's shoulder

"Yah, lazy. I like to play nice things but not ta-ta-ta-ta-ta" Again she pretended that she was playing scales in the air.

Ingeborg was a little over fourteen but she looked like an overgrown ten- or eleven-year-old American child Her light brown hair hung in a straight bob and her dress, which was too short and showed the wrinkled stockings at her knees, was also that of a ten-year-old The other people in the room looked just as odd It was not that they looked younger than their real ages, but that they looked five or six years out of date It was their clothes The men's jackets were short and narrow and most of the women's skirts were either too long or too short. Most of them wore no make-up They reminded me of Eng-

land and the tired people there, and yet this group was different—they didn't look as exhausted. There was more laughter and movement in them. Perhaps it was just a matter of temperament.

The old gentleman in the wing collar came toward me. "Is this your first visit to Norway?" he asked in English.

I nodded.

"I am sorry you've come in the winter, and this year there's so much frost and snow. But it's beautiful here outside of Oslo. Have you been on the mountain yet?"

"No, but I am going up with some friends on Sunday."

"You'll like it. Norway is poor now but beautiful. In the spring and summer there will be boating up the fjords. You must come again."

I took out a package of cigarettes and offered him one.

"I don't smoke myself. But give one to Elisabeth and the other young people. They give their hearts for a cigarette now."

Elisabeth, who had been talking to a group on my left, turned abruptly. "Did you say an American cigarette? That's one thing we do miss in Norway."

I passed the package around. When it was returned to me, there was only one left. I noticed that most of them put the cigarettes in their pockets.

Elisabeth and a young man whom I heard called Karl lit up and inhaled with deep pleasure. The latter turned to me. "I think we make it worse than it is about the cigarettes. The government did bring in tobacco right after the war and we get a decent ration of Norwegian cigarettes. In other countries I understand they get none at all. But this tastes good just the same."

Some of the guests had begun to leave. Mrs. Bergen stood at the doorway shaking their hands warmly and kissing some of them on the cheek. From the beginning the party had impressed me as a family affair. They all seemed to know each other from

childhood and spoke with warm intimacy. I asked the old gentleman whether these were relatives of the Bergen family

"Oh, no Just good friends Here in Norway most of us feel like a big family, though. It doesn't matter whether you actually are related or not. If we are friends, we grow up together and our children are raised together. We play together and mourn together, and there was a lot of that lately But now our spirits are coming back to normal. You can't beat a Norwegian so easily" He laughed again

"I suppose you've known the Bergen family for a long time?" I asked.

He nodded and leaned back in his chair as if to think about this "I have known Britta Bergen since she was born I knew her father and mother I was at her wedding and I was at the christening of Karin and Ingeborg and Trygve" He nodded his head again slowly. "It was a big day here when Trygve was born and was given the name of his father and the one of the father before him And now he looks like the image of Gunnar Trygve He has that same shock of blond hair and the gloomy blue eyes You notice they are not the light blue of his mother's or the girls'. They have some of Norway's north in them. All the Bergens have that They're real Norsemen, given to brooding but gay and reckless" He spoke about them with warm affection. "There were many happy days in this house—when Gunnar Trygve became professor and when Karin entered the conservatory. And then, of course, there was much sadness Gunnar Trygve was in the underground with other professors and students There was no coal and no food and the children couldn't go to school for a time Then the University was closed and Gunnar Trygve went up north to the woods Everything seemed to stop Everybody was afraid But we still came here every Thursday and Britta played for the children Sometimes only three or four would come and once the Gestapo came They looked all through the house but Britta didn't stop play-

ing. When she was finished with her piece—it was a Mozart sonata and I'll never forget it—she rose and there was the dignity of our whole nation in her. She spoke to the young German and asked him coldly whether he came to listen to the music." The old man remained silent for a moment, recalling the scene in detail.

"When did Mr Bergen die?" I asked.

"He came home from the woods in the winter of 1945 and he was a sick man. His lungs couldn't take the moisture and the cold. He wasn't long with us after that. A few weeks. When he died we were all here again and helped Britta change the house into a rooming house." He shook his head. "The bad part of it all is that it shows on the children. They got too serious too early. You can see it in Trygve who always sits brooding. And look at Karin. She used to be a real devil and now she looks serious even when she plays. Look at her."

I followed his gaze. Karin stood near the piano talking to Elisabeth Hauff. She was a slight pretty girl of about twenty-four. Her narrow stooped shoulders made her look frightened rather than sad. She had none of Elisabeth's boisterousness. It was true, I thought, I had never heard her laugh.

"But give it time, it'll all come back," the old man said.

Now in my room I looked at Mrs. Bergen as I remembered the old gentleman's words. She was finishing her cigarette and pressing it out carefully in the ash tray. "That was very good." She began to rise.

"Why don't you sit a while longer, Mrs. Bergen?" I offered spontaneously.

She looked at me. "You look much warmer now."

Indeed I had stopped shivering. "I do feel much warmer, thank you. I had a very good time Thursday night. The children play very well."

Her face lit up. "Yes, they're musical enough. I don't think

Ingeborg and Trygve have any musical talent, but Karin has"

"Is she still studying?" I asked

"She's beginning to again. She was in her second term at the conservatory when the war came and naturally stopped her studies. She's working at the library now and going to the conservatory evenings"

That explained why I hardly ever saw Karin at home.

"Next year she'll probably get a post with the orchestra. She'll have to train this summer, though, to make up for lost time"

"I suppose that's true for most of the young people in Norway now," I said. "They have to make up for the lost years"

"Yes. All of us do. And it's not only the lost years. There is more to do than there ever was. Everything is worn out, including the people."

Most Norwegians talked of the tremendous job ahead, of the reconstruction of the country. At first I had not been able to understand. There had been little bombing and not much fighting except in the north. Yet the city of Oslo, though unbombed, looked desolate. The houses peeled and the sidewalks were broken.

"I suppose Oslo is a perfect example of the attrition of war," I continued my thoughts aloud.

"That's just it. It's like a six-year plague and the body is just beginning to feel the real effects. Everything was at a standstill. There was no plumbing, no building, no repairing. The lifeline of the city, its commerce, was dead. And that's why it looks like a patient just up from a sick bed. Just look at this house." She pointed to the ceiling and the walls. "Everything is coming down little by little. For all those years it didn't get a new coat of paint. A hinge came off the door and there was none to replace it. Then the door began to shake until it broke. The same with the window frames—there was no plaster to fix the cracks until they began coming apart and now we have to stuff them

as best we can. And so it goes for the sidewalks. No street cleaners, no sanitation cars. A stone is loose in the sidewalk and it isn't fixed until there is a big hole in the street. The steps of the house wear away if they're not reinforced for six years. No whitewashing, no polishing of windows. It's true not only of Oslo but of all the other towns in Norway. In a way that was the great victory of the Germans."

I nodded. "But I've noticed, nevertheless, that people are bright and cheerful."

She stood up. "We may not show it but we are tired." She straightened her dress. "Now I really must get to work. I've been sitting here almost an hour." From the doorway she said: "Would you like to come to dinner this evening? We're having some reindeer meat that we were able to get from the country. You must be tired of fish."

Was I tired of fish? Ever since I had stepped off the train the smell of fish oil had hung over the city like the mist. It seemed to cling to everything. The walls, the streets, and the clothes. During my first week's stay I had eaten meat only once—corned-beef hash fried in fish oil. But the friend who was with me had exclaimed, "It's meat tonight. The food situation is getting better every day."

In the semidarkness of the late afternoon, Oslo looked depressing. Deep slush covered the streets. The freezing weather had subsided, giving way to a wet wind which swept in from the fjord. There was little traffic on the main street except for one or two battered taxis. Now and then an overcrowded streetcar rocked by precariously. I was later to find that this shabby streetcar, bursting with passengers who clung to the platforms and doors and who often lost their grip, was a symbol of post-war Europe's painful reconstruction.

As I walked toward the Grand Hotel, the streets were just beginning to fill with people pushing homeward through the

slush swinging brief cases or bundles. The crowds grew in numbers and became livelier. They walked buoyantly despite the sharp wind and wet snow, talking in loud voices and laughing often. The gusto of the Norwegians had impressed me more and more each day. They refused to see the barren store windows, the broken sidewalks, the drabness of the city itself. If they stood in a queue at one of the few open cinemas, they were not docile like the Londoners, they jostled each other, called to their friends, whistled. I watched women talking animatedly in shops which had nothing to sell but a few wooden figurines and perhaps some paper napkins. They felt the paper with their fingers as if they were examining the quality of fine linens. The book shops, which had the only available commodity in the city, did a flourishing business. The food shops were barren. I hadn't seen a fresh vegetable—except a cabbage head—nor fruit of any kind. After a week, I felt a sudden craving for something sweet and realized that the lack of sugar had been so drastic that it was already beginning to have its effect on me. I couldn't help but think of Stockholm. I thought of the strawberries and carnations flown from Italy and France and wondered how Mr. Croft would make out here without his after-dinner brandy. Yet when I complained about the injustice of it to a Norwegian who worked in the American Legation, he smiled.

"Why look at Sweden?" he said. "Sweden is an abnormality in Europe today. We are a normal part of the postwar continent. It is like this everywhere. A little worse, a little better. The pre-war normalcy of Sweden is abnormal now."

"But she's a Scandinavian sister country and right next door," I pressed.

He shook his head. "No. We always look at her as at a rich old uncle whose faults we know but with whom we get along. Why should we be annoyed with her? We were the ones who were in the war and we were the ones who won it."

I crossed the small park in front of the Storting (Norwegian

Parliament) to the Grand Hotel. Thyvold Fenn was waiting for me in the doorway. His six feet stooped as he shook my hand; and then with the peculiar restless jauntiness that characterized almost everything he did, he swung open the door leading to the café.

"Our Grand Hotel is not like the one in Stockholm," he said, "but it's much livelier. Look at them all having their four o'clock meal."

His cheery manner blended immediately with the chatter and noise of the room. "But we'll be American and have cocktails," he added

Although the Grand of Oslo was the biggest hotel in the city, the café bore no resemblance to elegance. It reminded me of a Lyons Corner House in London. The waiters hopped from table to table carrying large trays with steaming potatoes and herring. A ten-piece orchestra played a potpourri with brassy vigor. Ruddy-faced men sat at the tables drinking beer and smoking their pipes.

We found a table and called a waiter who promptly announced that the specialty of the day was horsemeat. Thyvold explained that I was a foreigner and that my eating habits were different. We would have some drinks, if it was possible, perhaps with some sandwiches. The waiter grinned. "Yes, you'll get what we have. Three different kinds of fishpaste."

Thyvold's eyes wandered restlessly around the room. I remembered this restlessness from London. I had met him during the United Nations Conference and had promised to let him show me some of Oslo. I knew little about him except that he had been in the RAF for six years and had been doing all sorts of odd jobs since his return home. In London, where he had been a temporary interpreter at the conference, he had spent most of his time in the telephone booths at Church House calling up wartime friends.

"Now tell me what you've seen here." He turned his eyes on me "Not much to see in Oslo, is there? I'm sick of it "

"But in London you said you wanted to get home as fast as you could "

"I'm sick of London, too. I'm sick of everywhere And yet I want to settle down "

"Aren't you doing that now?"

"Quite the opposite. Since the conference I've been in Brussels and Stockholm. I got tired of both places and came back here. But a couple of weeks around home and I keep thinking, what next?"

The waiter brought the liquor and sandwiches and Thyvold became Scandinavian He raised his glass, waited for me to raise mine, and then threw the whole drink down in the Norwegian fashion. Then he began attacking the sandwiches ferociously.

"You know," he said with his mouth full of food, "you'll probably meet more people like me in Europe You're going to be traveling all over, aren't you? Well, you'll meet them I see them wherever I go, no matter what the newspapers and the governments say."

"You mean everybody in Europe is sick of everything?"

"Maybe that's it. All my friends feel that way. You'll see some of them later tonight We're all crazy, I suppose. No No, on second thought I think it's these people here who are really crazy." He swung his fork in an arc to indicate the room, and burst out laughing "Look at that man over there. He's so red in the face he's probably getting apoplexy thinking of his income tax Look at him eat his potatoes and scoop up his gravy as though he doesn't expect to be able to eat tomorrow Must be a government employee "

All I could see in the elderly man he pointed to was the natural greediness of a person who did not usually get enough food Thyvold's attitude seemed childish and I wondered what he was driving at.

"All these government people," he was rattling on, "look the same to me. They're all frustrated and greedy. How can you expect them to understand us? They should have been out of circulation long ago. It's almost like a secret society. They learned a password, reconstruction, and they go around yammering it like a bunch of parrots. It makes them very proud because it is a very big word."

"What is it you hate so about your government?" I asked.

"It isn't just my government. It's not understanding anything any longer. I suppose the trouble with me is that when peace broke out, I and people like me didn't stop waging war."

I smiled at the expression. But Thyvold was serious. It was obvious that he had spent a long time trying to find out how to articulate a strange thing that was bothering him.

"All this life seems foolish to me. All I care about these days is myself. I'm just mad and I've been mad for a long time."

"What are you mad at?"

He drew a deep breath. "When a Norwegian gets mad he stays mad. I'm a funny fellow and I get very mad when I am waked up early in the morning. It was usually very quiet in our house. Fridrikstad, my home town, is a quiet place and we had a good quiet life. We had plenty of work, a gay party once or twice a week, hunting, shooting, and plenty of sleep." His features grew softer as he spoke. The wrinkles disappeared from his forehead and he looked calm. "Well, planes came over the house at seven o'clock one morning and woke me up. I was furious. My father just drank his coffee and said it was war. I didn't even stop to listen to the talk in the house. I took my bike down to Oslo. There was one emotion I remember and that is that I was mad. I stayed that way. There was shooting on the road. I saw some troops in the woods and then a dead person. I had never seen anyone lying on the road dead before. Down here in Oslo there was a crowd of young men going to the air ministry. I went with them. They took me just as I was, in my

sweater and ski pants, and sent me to the Oslo fort. It was all over there before it started, though I went into the woods with the others, then over the border to Sweden, and finally we got to England." He stopped and looked around for the waiter. "Let's have another schnapps and some more food."

"Did you stay in England all through the war?" I asked

He shook his head "No Not all the time I joined the Norwegian Air Force. Went out on patrols up on the north route. That went on for a long time Then I was shot down, taken prisoner, and after that I guess I saw about all the prison camps in Germany. When the big push started in Germany, a few other Norwegians and I escaped We had a great time I mean it, it was fun We just walked along the roads picking things up and selling them to Russian soldiers that we met on the way. After a while we joined a group of Russian war prisoners and marched all the way to Koenigsberg We went on to Odessa from there and then left on the first repatriation boat for England We got a lot of publicity out of that and it made us feel quite heroic Our pockets were stuffed with rubles But the most important thing was that I got a taste of making money out of nothing I was pretty expert at that by the time I was through Those days weren't so bad when I look back on them now." He paused to throw down his drink.

"I suppose you came back to Norway soon after that?"

"Yes With the government in May I knew it wasn't going to work out the minute I was back Everything was changed. My mother had died. My sisters were married and had gone to live in a strange town My father had moved away to live with my oldest sister. Everything was all mixed up When I went to visit the family, they were all less friendly than I expected Everybody was harder and seemed to treat me with suspicion. It wasn't just me The neighbors didn't seem to trust each other as much as they used to Why, people even had locks and keys made for their doors—something I never saw in Norway before.

After a while I even got the feeling that the government didn't trust chaps like me who had been in the army."

"How is that?"

"Well, here's an example. They gave me a job as gunnery instructor at the Royal Battle School. One day they fired me and three others and replaced us with fellows who hadn't been overseas at all. When we asked why, they said we were too realistic. We were teaching war. We were inspiring the youth with a spirit of militarism. Then they started treating us like children. Giving us lectures on reconstruction and rehabilitation. They tried to tell us how to fit into the community—all that sort of thing. Of course they were probably right but it seemed pretty funny to us. Many young people in Norway couldn't adjust themselves. They had spent seven years learning that it was right to steal, right to kill, right to hate. All that can't stop with the armistice."

"But that's the way veterans everywhere feel," I said. "We have the same problem in America and they have it in England."

He shook his head. "It's not a question of veterans. The American soldier or the British soldier wasn't completely cut off. He always got mail and some kind of news from his family and his friends. But we were completely cut off, never knowing whether we'd find anyone we knew when we got home. The people here also got used to living without us, they didn't even know whether we were alive. So when I came back I just didn't fit in."

He paused to draw a cigarette from the package I'd put on the table. "That's the answer. I don't belong. So what does one do? A man comes with a proposition for me to get some chemicals in Brussels. There is a profit in it for me. I go. They need a translator in London. I go. And everywhere I go I can have a good time because I can always find people like me."

We sat in silence for a while finishing our drinks. Then Thyvold rose. "My friends will be waiting at the Bristol. I promised to show you a Norwegian good time. Let's go." He put on a

black bowler hat which looked ridiculous with his army-cut trench coat. He walked jauntily through the crowd whistling a popular American tune.

The Bristol Hotel had been built in English Tudor style. Until only a few months ago, it had been occupied by officers of the RAF. Now, though it had reverted to its commercial role once again, it still retained many traces of British occupancy, not only in looks and name but in clientele. The small lobby was sprinkled with visiting English businessmen. As we walked through the large and somewhat elegant restaurant to our table, I heard clear British talk among the Norwegian. The waiters spoke English almost perfectly. To the left of the orchestra I saw a long table at which sat a group of RAF officers who were still left over. Thyvold's friends were indeed as lively and carefree as himself. Our arrival did not interrupt the merrymaking. A bottle of brown liquid stood on the table and one of the girls poured two glasses immediately.

"I'm sure you never tasted anything like this before," she said, laughing. "And I am sure nothing like this has ever been made before. It's a Norway Postwar Special." She wore a pretty multicolored sweater. Her shoulders were broad and, when she rose to dance with Thyvold, I noticed that she wore high leather boots which made her look even stronger and heavier than she actually was. Her size did not inhibit her in the least, however, and neither did the boots.

They danced with abandonment. There were other couples like them on the floor, some of them trying to imitate the jitterbug, others simply inventing new steps to break the monotony. They were dressed in everything from dinner clothes to ski boots and nobody seemed to mind. The only people in the room who looked formal were the waiters.

Our table was near the orchestra and my companions seemed to know the members of the band well. They called for tunes or occasionally rose to chat with the trumpet player between

numbers. One of the young men, a thin boy with pale cheeks, nodded his head to the music. "That's a good one they're playing 'Sentimental Journey,' isn't that it?"

"Yes." The girl next to him, who was much slighter than her friend but just as vivacious, nodded and sang the refrain in English. Her speech was British but she tried hard to Americanize it.

"Margaretha knows all the American songs," the other chap explained "She'll sing for us later when most of these people leave." He gulped his drink. He was plump and he crouched over his glass

"Were you two also in England during the war?" I asked.

"No, Thyvold is the only real hero," the plump boy replied. "We were all in Norway most of the time."

"That's why we all want to get out now," the other declared.

Margaretha nodded in agreement. "Everyone does. I suppose they all have different reasons but it amounts to the same thing"

"Not me," the plump boy countered. "How do I know it would be better anywhere else? Thyvold tells me it's the same everywhere."

"You've changed your tune, haven't you?" The girl sounded angry, as if he had betrayed her.

"Well, I've just changed my mind I'd just as soon stay in Norway for a while and see how things turn out. Some day I'd like to go to America just to see it."

The pale boy fingered the liquor bottle. "I thought you were a member of one of the Australia clubs?"

I turned to Margaretha "What is the Australia club?"

"We have all sorts of clubs, Australia clubs, an America club, and a few others They sprang up right after the war All the youth who want to leave the country joined them They want to go somewhere where things are different and where they can have a little room to move around."

"Did many join?"

She nodded emphatically "Very many did in the beginning. It seemed that all the young people in the country wanted to leave. We were closed up for so long that it's natural, isn't it?"

"Where would you like to go?"

She poured some of the liquor and smiled. Her pretty face and dark eyes seemed sad to me, although her manner was gay.

"I don't know. That's the trouble. When you get thinking about it seriously, you don't know where you want to go. Thyvold, who travels a lot, makes us feel much better. He says it isn't just Norway but everywhere that people feel the same way." She frowned as if trying to recall a thought. "I always used to say to myself that things would be different after the war. I don't know what I expected. But we all used to say it. There is no reason for me to complain, really. I have a job and we live the way all Norwegian families live. And it isn't the food, that doesn't bother us very much. But you somehow want something else. Maybe I would have been satisfied with things if it hadn't been for the liberation and the excitement then. For a month everything was changed. It was warm and sunny and we used to sing and walk in the streets for days. Then that was all over and there was nothing more to expect."

Thyvold and his partner were back at the table. They dropped into their chairs exhausted and laughing. "What's the matter with all of you?" Thyvold boomed. "I told my American friend she was going to meet some real Norwegians and you sit around as if a Nazi bomb had fallen on you. Is the food coming?"

His dancing partner beat the table to the rhythm of the orchestra and sang in a hoarse voice. The pale boy lifted the bottle high in the air and waved it to catch the eye of the waiter.

The plump boy exclaimed, "This is going to be a dull evening unless you buy another bottle, Thyvold."

Margaretha was silent. I felt that she saw, as I did, that the gaiety was make-believe. And so was the cynicism. It seemed to

me that they were simply lonely and frustrated. They had lost something and they couldn't name it.

The whole of Oslo seemed to be going up the mountain. Men, women, and children, carrying skus on their backs, paraded toward the underground streetcar station behind the National Theater. Bjorn Hoel, a young editor of the Labor party daily, his sister Sigrid, and I, were joining the trek. We were to meet Dr. Dalman of the Department of Health in front of the theater.

"By ten o'clock not a soul is left in the city," Bjorn remarked. "And it's the same every Sunday. In the winter it's the mountain and in the spring and summer the fjords."

"I admire your energy," I replied. "You never seem to sleep. Since I arrived I haven't gone to bed before one or two o'clock, yet every day begins at seven-thirty." I was still tired from the party at the Bristol the night before. The bitter taste of tobacco and that odd liquor had not been washed away by the camomile tea which I had had for breakfast. Besides, I was depressed remembering Thyvold and his friends.

Bjorn and his sister were quite different and it was refreshing to be with them. I wondered how they had escaped the hopelessness which marked the others. Sigrid was discussing Trygve Lie. The morning papers were full of his picture, for he had just returned on a short visit to Norway. Her voice was full of pride when she spoke of the respect which the whole world had for the country's former foreign minister. "He's the best propaganda the Norwegians could have," she exclaimed.

Bjorn turned to me. "You seem very silent today. Have you had enough of our austerity?"

I was embarrassed. "I feel as if I'd really seen destruction," I replied.

"Don't tell me you went up to the devastated regions in the north in one evening," he laughed.

"I don't mean physical destruction. It was just a group of

people your age at the Bristol. The whole restaurant seemed to be full of them 'The young men and women who flock to your Australia clubs."

"Oh, those." Sigrid waved her hand.

"It's not an easy problem," Bjorn said. "We spent a long time over at the paper trying to figure out what to do about it. It was frightening for a while. It looked as though we were going to be left without our youth altogether. It's not very serious now."

"It looked pretty depressing last night."

He laughed. "I suppose I'm their worst enemy. I'm an optimist. You see the trouble with them is that they've lost interest in Norway. But these are exciting times for Norway. The whole country is in a state of change. We're beginning the most ambitious project we've ever tried."

"We're actually going to be a modern industrial country," Sigrid put in.

They were referring to the Labor government's industrialization program which had just got under way. It was indeed ambitious. For the first time in her history, Norway was going to harness her water power, the fishing industry was to be modernized, and the government was planning to build new state-financed steel and aluminum plants to capitalize on her most important natural resources.

"Take the fishermen," Bjorn went on. "They've needed modernization for years. They've been worse off than anyone else in the country because they're so overcrowded. They never wanted to accept trawlers or other labor-saving devices because there was no industry to absorb the unemployment that would be caused. Well, now we're going to supply that industry, and give the fisherman his trawler."

"But won't the fishermen protest just the same?"

"Yes, of course. The fisherman doesn't like to leave his boat for the factory any more than the farmer likes to leave the land."

And we won't try to force them. But we're confident that once they understand what we're trying to do they'll come around. The point is that we have decided that things were not good enough before the war. We are going to raise the standard of living of the country. I think that's something worth working for and that's why I think our young cynics will come around, too."

I looked at Bjorn. His clothes were shabby and his face thin. But he had sounded the first note of genuine hope that I had heard in Europe.

Across the street I could see a cinema advertising an old Swedish movie.

"I wish they wouldn't show those Swedish movies all the time," Sigrid remarked.

Bjorn burst out laughing. "You can always predict Sigrid's reaction to anything. She isn't a human being any more but a type. She is the type of Norwegian who'll tell you that nothing but his own country is any good, that we in Norway are the only ones who ever suffered. She hates the Swedes bitterly and declares they can never redeem themselves for remaining neutral. Sigrid thinks that all Germans should be burned in a stack and none of these things can be discussed with her." He looked at his sister good-humoredly. "You'll find that we have just as many young ultra-nationalists as we have cynics. Both are post-war phenomena and quite new to Norway."

I caught sight of the short figure of Dr. Dalman hurrying toward us

"I'm sorry to be late," he puffed, "but the children had all sorts of problems this morning. I guess they still miss their comic strips on Sundays. My wife and I have to substitute by reading to them." Dr. Dalman had managed to take his wife and two children to the United States and they had spent the war there. Now his accent and dress were American and his loose coat and well-soled shoes indicated that he had returned recently from a

country where there were things to buy. He was back at his old job in the Department of Health. He had told me earlier that this would be the second Sunday in seven months that he could take off.

In the streetcar on the way up the mountain I sat beside Bjorn. He kept his eyes on Sigrid and the doctor. "Sigrid is a bit unreasonable at times," he explained, "and she's liable to get into an argument with Dr. Dalman just because he wasn't here during the war."

But conversation soon became impossible because of the crowd that pressed into the car at every stop. I thought of the warmth with which Bjorn had spoken of the government and its new plans. When I had first read about the program it had seemed interesting but cold and statistical. It had mentioned capital investments, balance of exports and imports, and had referred to people in terms of population shifts from north to west. Bjorn made it into a living thing. When he said, "We won't force the fishermen," I knew that the government was more concerned about the fishermen themselves than about the plan.

It was only a few minutes' walk from the streetcar to the ski lodge at the top of the hill. As we entered the lodge, steamy air struck us full in the face. The room was crowded with tanned skiers sitting at long wooden tables. A huge fire blazed at one end of the room. I felt good again. It looked as if the war had long since been forgotten. We found a table near a wide window which looked out onto the ski trail. Far below I could see the mist that hung over Oslo.

Dr. Dalman gazed around the room and rubbed his fingers. "It's good to be here again. I'm ashamed to confess that it's my first trip up the mountain since my return. Every time I come to a place I haven't been to since before the war I feel like a child rediscovering a long-lost toy." He shifted back and forth in his chair to be able to see the room from every angle. "Look

at them. They're noisy and they drink too much but they look good to me."

Sigrid smiled ironically. "Makes you feel like a Norwegian again, doesn't it?"

He ignored the sharpness in her voice and laughed "Not a very good one, I'm afraid I haven't had time to bring the children here once." He turned serious for a moment "We've been really busy in the Department. But of course, I expected it before I came back. We've always been very proud of our health record here and we're working hard to restore it to its 1939 level."

"I suppose there were a number of epidemics?" I asked.

"Yes, we've had an outbreak of diseases which had completely disappeared from this country in the last years before the war. Take diphtheria There wasn't a single case in 1939 and in 1945 there were 23,000 cases The same goes for influenza, scarlet fever, meningitis, and so on But we're lucky We're getting control again because the people are basically healthy The biggest problem we have now is venereal diseases. There are six times as many people infected as before the war" He sipped his beer and smacked his lips. "It's weak but it tastes good" He laughed and ran a hand through his short-cropped gray hair. "Look at how everything excites me, even the beer. The whole thing is fascinating"

Bjorn exclaimed, "That's just what I was telling Mrs Sulkin before we came up here."

"Maybe it's just because I'm a scientist and there is a mass of new reactions which I've never had a chance to study before," Dr Dalman continued

As he spoke a tall girl passed our table and sat down in the far corner of the room She looked strangely familiar to me. I tried to get a full view of her face but Bjorn turned in his chair and blocked her.

"Watching my own children back here is a new experiment,"

Dr Dalman continued "They hardly remembered Norway, and of course they didn't speak the language although we tried to teach it to them in America. We've been back seven months and they have practically forgotten their English I believe it's deliberate, especially in the older ones. They wanted to be like the other children around them so much that they not only forgot their English but refused to wear their American clothes and insisted on wearing old ski togs to school. Naturally, for the transition period we brought cans of orange juice and fruits and all sorts of other things that they had been used to in America. But it wasn't necessary. They never asked for them."

"How are they getting along with the other children? Did they meet any resentment in the beginning?" I asked.

"Less than we adults did." He looked toward Sigrid with a smile. "Children seem to be more sensible about those things. Of course they weren't a match for some of the children here who had matured during the occupation. Mine are still kids. Many of the others are little adults." I thought of little Trygve Bergen with his brooding Norseman's eyes. "The average occupation child is tough and suspicious. One of the things that the war took away from children was the conviction that there was no evil. A child refuses to believe that there is evil and once he loses that faith he's no longer a child."

He paused. "You'll be surprised how strong that faith is. Shortly after the war broke out, my daughter, Christina, who was four years old at the time, asked my wife who Hitler was. Her mother told her he was a very bad man. 'But there aren't all bad people,' Christina said. My wife explained that Hitler *was* all bad. A few days later, out of the blue, Christina said, 'Mama, there is a tiny Hitler, though, next to the big bad Hitler, and the tiny one may be good.' Christina was fortunate to have left Norway before the Nazis came. She never discovered that there was no tiny Hitler who was a bit good. The others her age who remained learned otherwise. That's what made them

grow up so fast mentally. There is nothing that can be done about them. They'll just have to go on being adults."

"But our birthrate is increasing so we don't have to worry about having too many adults in Norway," Bjorn smiled.

As he spoke he shifted in his chair and I caught sight of the tall girl again. I recognized her. She was a Norwegian girl I had known at a boarding school in England several years before the war. I couldn't remember her name but I was sure it was she. She was the girl who sang at our school parties and wanted to become a singer. I had wondered about her when I first came to Norway but had had no way of locating her.

"Excuse me for a moment. I think I see someone who went to school with me in England." I rose to go to her.

As I approached, I began to doubt whether she was the same person. This was an attractive, very pale, even haggard-looking woman in her early thirties. The girl I had known could not have been her age nor could she have had the pasty complexion. But, of course, there had been a war.

As I came up she turned her full face toward me and my doubts were dispelled. There was no recognition, however, in her cold blue eyes. When I asked whether she had gone to the Oak Ridge School in Sussex, she nodded but her expression did not change. Then she said, in what was almost a whisper, "I remember you. You were there just a short time and then you moved to London." She stretched out her hand and smiled. It was more of a grimace than a smile and it made her face look even older. Her eyes looked away. I felt embarrassed. I suppose there is something embarrassing about all such meetings. We had hardly ever talked to each other in school and the only connection we had now was the fact that we both remembered having been there. Her manner put me off. I didn't know whether to sit down or simply shake hands and leave. I was about to turn away when she spoke suddenly. "Don't go yet." Her voice dropped again. "I thought we could have a talk."

I was glad that she had spoken up "Of course I'm at a table at the other end with some Norwegian friends. Come join us and then we can have an hour together afterward"

She was hesitant for a moment but finally agreed. She gathered up her gloves and a worn leather pocketbook and followed me.

The men rose as we approached and Dr. Dalman stretched out his hand to my companion, greeting her by name

"Oh, you know each other," I said.

Sigrid replied quietly, "Yes, we know Miss Olburg."

I sensed something in her tone and knew that I should not have brought my friend to join us, but I did not know why. After a few moments of listless conversation, Sigrid rose.

"Bjorn, I'm afraid I must leave now. Are you staying?"

She did not wait for his answer but turned and left. Bjorn, reddening, rose, shook hands with us apologetically and followed her.

"So you and Ingrid went to school together?" Dr. Dalman remarked, vigorously pretending that nothing had happened.

Ingrid drew a slip of paper from her pocketbook, scribbled her name and address on it, and handed it to me. "I have to be going too. Please come and see me tomorrow or the next day. I haven't got a telephone." She smiled at the doctor, who said something about her visiting him, and walked away.

Dr. Dalman tapped the table with his fingers meditatively. "It's not as mysterious as you probably think," he said to me. "This is not an uncommon experience here these days. I'd classify it under the 'heritages of war'—like the venereal diseases. This one is called ostracism."

I had guessed that it was something like that. It was odd that the first collaborator I had ever met should turn out to be someone I knew.

"What did she do?" I asked.

"The story is that she was the mistress of a German. She was

cleared by law because she was not a member of the Quisling party and had not actually profited from her relations with the enemy. But, of course, legal acquittal doesn't matter in these things. Ever since the liberation she has been an outsider."

"Has anybody tried to find out whether or not she really is guilty?"

The doctor shook his head. "You can't easily define guilt in a case like this. People don't pay attention to what the court said. This is one of the nastiest problems we have. It's probably more evident in Norway than elsewhere because we were always a strongly united and homogeneous people. We never had strong hates or prejudices. We used to quarrel with each other, yes, because we're a hot-blooded people. But those quarrels were easy to forget. Now there are all sorts of splits and hatreds which never existed before."

The feeling I had had the night before returned. It was obvious that despite Bjorn's hopefulness and despite the great ambition of the government's plan there were still dozens of problems which might never be solved. Only twenty minutes earlier the room had looked as if the war had long been forgotten, and now it was crowded with things the war had left behind—epidemics, adult children, nationalism, and collaboration.

"There has been too much hating altogether," he continued. "I wish there were some way in which we could make people restrict their bitterness to legally defined collaborators. It is such a big word. Who is to say who was a collaborator? What about the shopkeeper who stayed in business during the occupation? What about the farmer who got rich on high prices? The bookseller who carried German maps? The grocer who had a German customer? I feel that the time has come to draw the line. The quislings have been punished or are being punished but people like Ingrid keep getting punished again and again. What's the sense to that? It's more important to rehabilitate them."

"I understand that the government is doing a great deal right

now along just those lines," I said "It has even made arrangements to care for the German babies of Norwegian mothers"

"True enough. The government and the scientists see it clearly enough. But most people are like Sigrid. It's going to take them a long time to get over the shock they felt when the Germans executed the first Norwegian." He paused "Even I, who was not in the country, felt the effects of that act. You see we had had no execution at all in Norway since 1884." He hunched his shoulders. "That's why it's going to take a long time for people to forgive anyone who compromised with the enemy."

Ingrid lived in a suburb of Oslo. I had to take two streetcars to get to her house, and as I waited in the moist wind and watched streetcar after streetcar go by filled to capacity I was tempted to turn back. But I remembered her insistent voice when she had asked me to visit and I was curious.

The house was modern from the outside, something like the houses in Stockholm but not as fresh looking. She opened the door just an inch to see who was there. When she saw me she did not throw it open but gave me just room enough to slip in. We walked down a half flight of stairs to a low-ceilinged living room. A wood fire was blazing. She took my coat and motioned to the chair.

It was difficult to begin talking. We exchanged a few casual remarks about the room and tried to compare memories of the school we had gone to.

"I suppose Dalman told you about me," she said finally. "I wish you'd tell me what you think, so we can get it out of the way and act normally." Her face was composed and, except for the deep lines under her eyes, she was attractive.

"Frankly, I don't know what I think," I said.

"Everything you heard from Dalman is true and can't be explained away. All I can say is that I was weak. I didn't like what

the Nazis were doing here any more than anybody else." She stood near the fire running her fingers through her hair nervously. She kept her eyes away from me.

"You may remember that I wanted to be a singer. Well, that was part of it. I studied in Berlin after England and had a good time there I met many nice Germans and Peter was one of them. He was a film producer. We never talked about Nazism or what was going on in Germany." She spoke in a low monotone. "When I returned to Norway I went on the stage I was a small success in an operetta. When the war broke out I was lost, somehow I didn't have many friends here I had been abroad for so long that I had lost touch. The few new friends I made went either to Sweden or England. My family was just a family. They didn't care much for my singing publicly and I saw them only at meals. Peter came to Norway in 1942 to see me. He was on leave. He was not one of the Nazis in our streets. Of course he was a German in a German uniform, and that's what people saw. But I suppose that to me he was Berlin and the beginning of my career and the life before the war. I knew it was wrong but I didn't feel wrong when I was with Peter."

"What did your friends say?"

"I had no friends. I saw no one. Life had ended with the occupation. Peter was the way he used to be and that was all that mattered." She stopped and turned toward me. "We've both suffered for it. He's either frozen on the Eastern front or in Germany. I haven't heard."

She sat down again and put her hands in her lap. "I've got a long way to go to get back into things. I can't blame Sigrid Hoel and others for not speaking to me. How can I say to them that I was lonely, too, that I was hungry, too, that I had a brother in the underground, too, and that I love Norway as much as they do? They'll say. When you were lonely you let the enemy come and console you, you accepted his flowers, you read his letters eagerly, you moved out of Oslo to be with him, you

never went to the mountains to fight. And, of course, they're right. I never was very strong nor very clever." Her voice was cold. There was no self pity in it.

"What are you doing now?"

She looked up and smiled. For the first time she looked directly at me. "Waiting. That's all I can do. I am excluded from the professional world and from practically everything else. After the trial, when I came home to the family, I worked in a nursery for evacuees from the north until the word got around. I've had twelve different jobs since the end of the war. In the beginning I thought I'd commit suicide. But I got used to it, and now I tell them in advance who I am and what my background is."

"Do you think people are beginning to change?"

She shook her head. "Not yet. The gap is too wide. I can see it in my mother's face, in the grocer's smile, even in all those who want to be nice, in Dr. Dalman. I'm like a convict who's been released from a penitentiary." She laughed. "But maybe it'll change."

"Would you like to leave Norway?"

"No. I want to see if I can become a part of it again. Where would I go, anyhow?"

There was a knock on the door and an elderly woman entered.

"Come in, Mother. This is my friend from America. She has come to see me."

Mrs. Olburg stopped in her tracks and then came to shake my hand. "Welcome. How do you do?" She looked at me with what I thought was disbelief.

Ingrid looked livelier. "We were together on the mountain Sunday with Doctor Dalman and another couple. Perhaps we could have some wine now."

Mrs. Olburg was still looking at me. "Why, yes," she replied. "It's right here in the cupboard."

Ingrid went on talking about the fine time we had had on the mountain, never once mentioning that she had met me years earlier at school. I was a new friend who'd come to see her, and that was all that mattered.

I was packing in my room. Mrs. Bergen, who had come in to help, was tying a package of books and pamphlets I had picked up during my stay. "I never realized that we Norwegians printed so much about ourselves. All these novels about the underground and the concentration camps. It's about time something else was written."

I could see in her behavior that something was bothering her and the comment on the books was just conversation. I locked my suitcase and took a last look at the dresser before closing my overnight case. Then I turned to ask for the bill. She blushed and what she had been waiting to say began to come out.

"I wanted to speak about it. Your last bill comes to seventy-eight kronor. I wonder whether you'd mind doing me a very great favor. According to the ration system, we won't be able to buy a pair of leather shoes until October. I bought Trygve a pair of snowboots which means that he can't have shoes until next January. I thought you might send us some from Sweden for the money."

"Of course, Mrs. Bergen. I'll be glad to. What are their sizes?"

I glanced down at her own shoes. We caught each other's eyes and burst out laughing simultaneously. I saw that it was all right to ask, "What's your own size?"

"Thirty-seven," she said, still laughing. "It would be nice if they had high heels and were open, like yours, to go with my black dress." It was the dress in which she looked so different on her musical evenings. It was the first time in many years, perhaps, that Mrs. Bergen had allowed herself to be impractical.

The handsome tanned lady with steel-gray hair, who was sharing my train compartment, leaned out the window to wave to a man and young boy standing on the platform. When the train started moving, she threw kisses and called to them in Norwegian. As she walked by me to take her seat she spoke to me, when I told her I did not understand she asked in excellent English whether I was British.

"No. American "

"How nice. There aren't many Americans in Norway. Mostly British " She was lively and talkative. "It's a shame you chose such a cold time of the year to visit us. I hope you were not too uncomfortable. It will be much better in a few hours when we get into Sweden "

She sat down and began rummaging in a canvas brief case, drew out a pad of paper and began making notes. I turned to my book but couldn't help looking at her. She was striking. Her hair was cut very short in the back, and soft waves formed around a very high forehead. There were two deep wrinkles on the sides of her full mouth.

She looked up and smiled. In the course of the train conversation which followed, my curiosity was aroused when she remarked casually that however broken down these trains, they were luxurious compared to the German transports.

"Do you mean the slave-labor transports?"

"No. I mean the concentration camp transports and death transports. I knew them well "

"Were you at Grini?" I asked. Grini had been the ill-famed German concentration camp at Oslo about which a dozen books had been written and to which many of the people I had met in Norway had paid a visit at one time or another.

"Grini, too. But I was referring to Ravensbrueck. I spent over three years there " She smiled again. "And like most ex-concentration camp inmates, I'm bound to refer to it at one time or another. It always creeps into every conversation."

The conductor entered to collect our tickets. When he saw my companion, he took his cap off. "Good evening, Mrs. Sylvansen, so you're on the way again?" She made a reply in Norwegian which I couldn't follow.

I had heard of Sylvia Sylvansen many times since coming to Scandinavia. In a way she had been a symbol of Norway's resistance. A friend of the late Queen and wife of a prominent Norwegian surgeon, probably the man at the station, she was one of the leaders of the so-called King's Knights' Underground. She had been arrested by the Germans and shipped from prison to prison until she finally reached Ravensbrueck, the same camp from which Mrs. Lauer and her friends had come to Sweden. Their rescue had been brought about, in great part, by this very Sylvia Sylvansen. For it was she who had smuggled a letter to the President of the Swedish Red Cross, Count Folke Bernadotte, describing the conditions of the camp and urging him to do something about it. Later, at his famous meeting with Himmler, the Count obtained the release of twenty thousand women from Ravensbrueck and brought them to Sweden.

When the conductor had gone, Mrs. Sylvansen continued where she had left off. "Frankly, I don't mind talking about the camp. I think one should. The whole world must know the details of a concentration camp in order to know why there must be peace. People must be reminded again and again. The only ones who can keep them reminded are the ones who were there. We who survived are mostly the dead who have returned and we must never forget it. When things looked beyond all hope and there were dead in the same beds as the living, I lay in my bunk and wrote down the details, hoping not to be killed before I had finished and got the story out. I saved the notes in the sole of my shoe. I think the only thing that kept me going was the fact that it was so horrible that I knew the outside world would have to be told. I wasn't the only one. There was a pious young Jew at Buchenwald who lived only long enough to hand a

soaked pile of notes to an American soldier and say, 'I had to live so you could see me and get this.' " She paused for a moment and lit a cigarette.

"There is no use repeating the horror stories. But there is one important thing. In the camp, we were Poles, Hungarians, Latvians, Austrians, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Norwegians, Ukrainians. We were intellectuals, housewives, good people and bad. What I am trying to do is get these people—the ones who are left over—together again in an international organization. We must tell our story not separately but jointly. We must have congresses and conventions in different countries every year. I see the nucleus for peace in those people because they really know war."

I thought of Mea Lauer and her friends, and wondered whether they belonged to any such organization. Would they be interested? "Mrs. Sylvensen, aren't most of the survivors too broken and too uprooted?"

She nodded. "Yes, but if we have an organization we can also take care of them. I've been going from country to country and have been able to get many working for this thing. I don't see why I shouldn't continue trying."

The train stopped with a jerk and I heard the shouts, "Charlottenburg." We had just crossed the Swedish border. Mrs. Sylvensen rose to put on her coat. She was well over fifty and might have settled down to a quiet life in Norway. No doubt she needed the rest badly. But the thought seemed never to have entered her mind.

She took my arm. "We can have a fine dinner now."

We walked into the warm station restaurant. "It's always so hot in Swedish places," Mrs. Sylvensen commented.

It was the first time since I had reached Norway that I had not felt cold.

There was no mistaking it, we were back in Sweden. The counters were laden with sandwiches, fruit and chocolates.

Everything was stiff and clean. Mrs. Sylvansen sat down and immediately ordered a long series of courses. Before the food came she stepped up to the counter and bought two apples and two oranges. There was a broad smile on her face when she returned.

“Here. I just couldn’t resist. Let’s have some before the meal.” She bit into the large red apple and the juice came bursting forth.

The Paradox

F I N L A N D

THREE OF US IFANED on the boat railing looking northward toward the Arctic Circle. As far as the eye could see, there was nothing but dull gray ice.

Somewhere in the distance, there was no telling where, the ice blended into the sky which was the same dead color. There were no seabirds, no clouds. The only glimpse of water was directly below where the tiny boat stirred up a green motion as it cut its own narrow lane across the frozen Baltic. We ourselves could feel none of the motion. It was like pushing across a wasteland on an old train. The smoke of the boat faded quickly into the spaceless quiet that surrounded us.

"It freezes one just to look at it," said the short young man standing at my right. He was a Belgian and had told me earlier that he was on his way to Finland to help make a trade agreement between his country and the Finns. The man next to him, a heavy-set Englishman, said, "Pretty dismal, isn't it? I suppose it's just as grim in Finland. That's what they tell me."

"The stories one hears in Sweden certainly don't make it sound promising," I commented.

I was chilled to the bone. To escape the Britisher and the Belgian, I turned back to the tiny, overcrowded, overheated salon from which I had fled only a few minutes earlier. About

seventy people were crowded into a space meant to accommodate twenty. They sat on wooden folding chairs, smoked stale-smelling cigarettes, and drank syrupy liquors. Amidst the thick smoke and rank odors, I detected the sharp aroma of good Swedish coffee. I picked up a cup at the tiny bar and found myself a corner.

It was easy to see that the *S.S. Hermdal* had once been comfortable and something of a pleasure cruiser. For even now, crowded as it was, its corridors and decks strewn with food parcels and folding chairs on which dozens spent the night, it was miraculously clean in the peculiarly Swedish manner.

Beside me sat a group of children with large cardboard signs hanging on their chests. Printed letters announced FINNISH CHILD, and gave the name below. There were six of them with their guardian, a plain-looking Swedish girl in a gray uniform, for whom they seemed to have immense respect and at whose bidding they sat in silence. Their heads were shaven; most of them had wide blue eyes and round faces.

They were part of a large group of Finnish children, ranging in age from two to twelve, who were on their way home from Sweden where they had spent a few happy months in private homes or small camps. Ever since we had left Stockholm, I had seen them scurrying about the ship, scrambling up and down the gangways, wrestling in the passages, laughing and shouting to each other in the liquid sounds of Finnish, which in their mouths sounded oriental. Every half hour or so the hoarse loudspeaker in the lounge would announce the name of one who had been lost somewhere in the ship's maze, and the passengers, with garrulous good humor, would begin reading the signs of the little ones at their elbows.

Yet they seemed more in character sitting here shyly. For when I first saw them come aboard they had marched up the gangplank in a long double column, each wearing high boots, a long gray coat, and a sheepskin hat, their faces brown and

open They had been a column of miniature peasants And now, like peasants, they sat among strangers and stared. Apparently I stared just as hard, for their guardian turned to me with a smile and said in careful English, "They're very quiet and I am having a rest You are American, yes?"

"Yes How did you know? I am not wearing a sign on my chest." I laughed

"I heard you speak to the other gentlemen Are you a Quaker?"

"No. Why? Are there many Quakers in Finland?"

Her face turned serious and she nodded "I thought you were a Quaker because the only Americans I have seen going to Finland were Friends. They are helping much in our work"

"Do they run camps for Finnish children?" I asked.

"No They mostly distribute food and clothes in the north of Finland That's where it's worst. I went up there in the beginning. It was terrible"

"Do these children come from the north?"

She nodded "Yes They're farmers' children."

"How long have they been in Sweden? They all look very healthy."

Two of the boys whispered and stared at me in awe, fascinated by the alien sound of the language

"This group was in Sweden for six months It was good for them" She looked at the youngsters fondly. "They didn't look like this when I brought them All the good milk and food and sun and clothes made them look like this" She clasped the boy next to her by the chin and turned his head as if to have me inspect the fullness of his cheeks and his healthy color He tried to twist his head away The others giggled and suddenly the child's eyes filled with tears The girl, stricken with remorse, leaned to whisper something to him He turned away

"I frightened him," she said apologetically After a moment she went on "But what good does it all do? Now they're

all going back to their homes. A few months ago I visited a group who had been in Sweden. They were hungry again. They didn't have any shoes." She stopped abruptly. "Are you very interested?"

"Yes, indeed."

"I have some letters in our cabin. I'll bring them." She spoke to the children, rose and disappeared quickly.

I tried to talk to the youngster who had been frightened but he turned away with an embarrassed smile. One of them, it suddenly occurred to me, was a little girl. It had been difficult to tell her apart from the others because of her shaven head and ski pants. I tried to speak to her in broken Swedish. She made a reply which I couldn't understand. The others burst out laughing and began to repeat what she had said in a sing-song. The guardian returned while they were still chanting. She put her finger to her lips and they fell silent.

"What were they saying?" I tried to ask the little girl her name in Swedish and they started this."

She laughed. "They didn't understand the question, but when they heard the Swedish they sang a little verse they were taught at the camp—"Thanks to Sweden for helping Finland." It's silly to teach them that, anyhow." She put a folder of papers on the table. "Here are some things I tried to translate into English for the Friends. It tells about the parish this little girl comes from. Most of them come from similar areas."

I picked up a typewritten sheet entitled KUUSAMO. This was the name of a remote Lapland province which had been badly damaged during the war. Kuusamo, said the paper, was a backwoods district. Like most of Finland it was dotted with lakes and forests. Just a half hour earlier I had been looking northward toward this province and it had hardly seemed possible that people could live beyond that gray ice—and quite unbelievable that war could have reached so far. And yet here was the story of hundreds of little farms which had been there and were now

totally destroyed. And just across the table from me sat a round-faced child who, except for her shaven head, might have come from a farm anywhere.

The people of Kuusamo, I read, were like their climate, dark and rugged. They lived off their farms, their river and lake fishing, and their enormous reindeer herds. Fourteen thousand of them had come south during the fighting. Most of their houses had been burned, their agricultural tools destroyed. Nine-tenths of their reindeer herds had been killed. They had lost most of their fishing nets. And I read, "Of the one thousand, five hundred and sixty sewing machines in the parish, only ten are left."

I looked up. "Is this child going back to Kuusamo?"

She nodded. "Most of them are returning to their homes. Their parents should not have gone back in the first place, I suppose, but nothing could stop them. I don't know how they can live now."

"How do they live?" According to this paper, they have no transport, no lumber, no tools, no food, no clothing and no way of getting any."

She nodded. "That's just it. The whole of Finland is miserable and the north is worst of all. We get letters all the time." She looked through her papers again. "Here is one right here from this boy's mother." She began to read, translating literally as she went along. I took it down.

Hemoo, Finland

Good day good relief people

I am one of the refugees who live in Hemoo and beg to get also for these children something warm because they are naked and have nothing to put on. When winter comes and it is cold in this big farmhouse as big as a castle and we are also too poor to buy anything new because everything is terrible dear and father is sick having suffered injuries in the war and the children are small. Kallu becoming five years old on the 25th and Sirkka is eight months old. Mattu is nine years but goes to school and there is only one suit to wear and no stockings except mother's torn ones because the shoes are bad and it's a long distance to school and mother and father

have no clothes than the ones we have on so there are no old ones to make new ones for Martti or even repair so I beg that if you get results out of your collection and would be so kind and send us something for we are living far in the backwoods and never know where and when we can get anything only I saw this in the paper and started to write you and hope that I won't waste money on postage for now are dear times for us Karelians otherwise too and the cold always makes us shiver even as I write this and I hope also in praying to God that he hears us and will not forsake us

Ino Wiras House

Koskaelamen Ingrit

When in my distress I cry out to God he will not forsake me!

She folded the letter and slipped it back among the other papers.

"Is this Martti?" I looked at the healthy boy who had been listening intently.

She nodded. "Yes. He looks quite different now. But there are hundreds like him who'll never get to Sweden and who cannot go to school because they have no shoes. This was one of a thousand letters" She put her papers together and looked at her wristwatch. "We must go to lunch now." She stood up. The children followed her to the door where they lined up in twos for their march into the dining room. I knew that they were not aware that they were about to have their last meal of milk, butter, eggs, meat, and fruit in many months, perhaps years—unless by some miracle they returned to Sweden. For we were due at Turku, Finland, this afternoon.

I leaned back to think of Kuusamo with its ten remaining sewing machines and Martti tearing holes in his irreplaceable boots, and all at once I was flooded with confusion. These were Finns. How was one supposed to feel about Finns? I had been angry at the Swedes for their neutrality. Why not angrier at the Finns for their Nazi alliance? But what did that have to do with a letter which began, "Good day good relief people?"

"We're not landing until very late this evening." The Belgian stood before me. He wore yellow shoes which seemed to match

his gold teeth. He waved toward the Britisher and a Finnish lumberman whom I had met the day before. They joined him at the table where the children had been sitting. They were engrossed in conversation.

"You're sure I can't get up to Viborg?" the Englishman demanded. He brought a cigarette stub to his lips.

"No Viborg gone. Not here." The Finn threw his arm out in a wide gesture. I caught a glimpse of a small square ring on his forefinger. It was the traditional ring, I knew, worn by all Finns who had secondary education.

"Yes, I know, I know," the Englishman persisted. "Can't we bribe the bloody Russians and get there? After all, I've got my offices there."

The Finn smiled. "Why you let the Russians come back to Viborg? You must be here. Now is too late. Viborg is Russia."

"I don't know why I'm going to this bloody place, anyhow. I can't even find out what's happened to my old offices. You say there is no paper for me to buy—the Russians take it all—what's the bloody use?"

The Finn shrugged his shoulders. "Yes, we are paying a heavy price." He seemed to be trying to shrink into his beaver-lined coat, but succeeded only in making himself look somewhat ridiculous. As if he had recognized immediately that this attitude of self pity did not suit him, he remarked confidentially, "Do not mind, my friend. You know the fine days we had in my house. It will be good. Drink, food."

The Belgian winked at me. "It's not so bad as he says. We can still do some business in Finland. Of course they're not as well off as Belgium now but they've got wood and paper." His small eyes squinted and he drank his liquor with deep satisfaction.

It was after midnight when the boat drew alongside the wharf at Turku. Two weak searchlights guided us down the

shaky gangplank. We stumbled in pitch blackness to a great hangar-like structure and waited in a freezing wind for half an hour before the doors to the customs hall opened. Fur-capped guards scurried back and forth over the concrete floor, shouting long sentences to each other. The great hall filled rapidly with what seemed to me twice as many people as had been aboard ship. They pushed and fought along a low counter. I brought my suitcase well out of the crowd and waited for the rush to subside. I was glad I did, for from where I stood I could see the inspectors, seized by the general excitement, dumping the entire contents of suitcases onto the floor and shuffling their hands through them as if they were sifting for gold.

An inspector in an open, worn sheepskin coat approached me and spoke rapidly in Finnish. I handed him my passport. He took one glance at the letters USA on the cover and shouted for the entire room to hear, "*Amerikanska diplomata!*" He saluted, chalked my bag without opening it, and walked away.

Immediately two porters descended on me and while one lifted my bag and started toward the end of the hall, the other grinned and pointed to my pocketbook. I tried to dismiss him with a cigarette but he continued to gesticulate and repeated in Swedish, "Penga, penga." I realized that he was asking whether I wanted to exchange any money. I shook my head but he persisted, quoting figures in a mixture of German and Swedish. He was willing to buy my Swedish crowns for a hundred Finnish marks each.

I walked off toward the other porter who was waiting at the other end of the room. "Helsinki train," he said, pointing into the darkness. I nodded and turned to look at the room once again. There had been something oddly familiar about it, and as I looked back now at the cloth bundles, the cloth boots, the sheepskin coats and the shaven heads of the men, it seemed that I was back in Eastern Europe.

The surprise I had felt at the Turku depot carried over to Helsinki. Here too I had the strange sensation of coming into touch with Eastern Europe. It was a surprise and a shock, because the memory I had of this Northern capital which I had visited as a child was of a modern, lively, clean city with trim people and bright store windows full of beautiful dolls and mechanical toys.

The square in front of the railway station was wide and desolate. The buildings were chipped and peeling, store windows were empty, some of them boarded up where the glass had fallen out. I had seen these things in Oslo, but here it was the people who were different. They walked the streets gloomily. They wore torn cloth or sheepskin coats, woolen shawls over their heads, and felt boots. Without their once-stylish clothes and hardened by the war years, they looked squat and dark. There were carts and horses on the roads. The few automobiles I saw carried odd contraptions on their backs, wood-burners which produced a substitute for gasoline of which there was none in the country. Many young men walked about in the blue Finnish officers' uniform. With their red and gold trimmings, their sharply cut breeches, their visored caps and their worn and sometimes split leather puttees, they looked grotesque on the half-deserted streets.

Perhaps the memory of an attractive Helsinki was inspired by the enthusiasm of my father with whom I had first visited Finland. He had tried to instill in me his admiration for what he called, "this model little country." Then, and often in later years, he spoke of Finland's great social advances. When we visited the parliament buildings, he explained carefully how Finland had never completely succumbed to the Czars. He told me how the general strike in Russia after the Japanese War of 1905 spread to Finland and forced the Czar to restore the little country's constitution. He spoke about Finland's parliament, her women's suffrage, about all her achievements since the 1918

liberation. He spoke at length of the land reform which had made thousands of peasants independent, of the eight-hour day, old-age pensions and other social reforms, and he talked much about Finland's freedom. That impression had stayed with me for many years. When Finland became Germany's ally, it was almost a personal blow.

What I found during my first few days in Helsinki now was a far cry from my childhood conception.

One of the first people I met was Professor Sauri who taught Finnish literature at the University of Helsinki and directed the National Students' Union with its fifteen thousand members. I visited him at the University. He was a short bald man with gold-framed spectacles shielding tiny eyes. He took me through the halls pointing out the various busts and pictures of Finnish heroes, but losing no opportunity to direct my attention to bomb damage caused by the Russians.

In the faculty room he pulled me to the window. "That," he said, pointing across the courtyard to a bombed building, "was our library and they knew it perfectly well." He turned aside shaking his head. "We had many thousands of books there. It was a serious blow at our culture and that's what they intended. What other reasons could they have had?" He smiled. "Perhaps I'm too emotional for a professor but it hurt us all deeply. We are lovers of books and we have a long beautiful culture, a Western culture. The Russians were jealous."

He led the way to two leather chairs and continued, "I have no doubt that the people in America understand Finland's tragedy."

I shrugged. "As you know, Americans have always had a fondness for Finland. But I don't think that many of them were able to accept your alliance with the Nazis."

"Nazis, Nazis—that's all we hear." He waved his hands in the air angrily. "The whole thing is an exaggeration. Finland and Germany always had close ties. It was Germany who sent her

fleet to help us win our independence in 1918. We can't forget that. And our cultural ties were very close. All our books came from Germany. All our professors studied there."

I remembered that Kage Rimer at Lidingö had used almost the same words about Sweden's relation to Germany, and yet I had not felt the anger I was beginning to feel now. Perhaps it was because Kage had been attempting to justify a neutrality, while Professor Sauri was trying to justify an alliance.

"As far as the Nazis are concerned"—he pursed his lips—"well, we didn't think of them the way you did. You know what propaganda is in war. Do you remember the stories told in the last war? Have you forgotten the fantastic tales about Belgian children? You can't judge us. All we did was defend this country which we love and this civilization which we cherish."

His tiny eyes looked watery and I could see that he was again becoming "too emotional for a professor."

"Now we are in a bad position," he went on. "We are defeated and we're suffering the pain of defeat. Look at us. We are naked and hungry. And over there"—he pointed toward the window—"is the Tornå and in it sits Zhdanov making slaves of our people. They have us by the throat and we must smile."

"In Sweden I heard many stories of Russian control in Finland, Professor Sauri. But I was rather surprised by the apparent absence of controls. Your government seems independent, you have your own parliament, I understand the press is free and I haven't seen a single Russian soldier," I argued.

"We are not an occupied country." He was indignant. "How could you expect Russian soldiers? As far as controls go, what about the trials? Weren't they ordered by Moscow?"

"Don't you believe the war criminals should have been put on trial?"

"War criminals, indeed. Ryti and Tanner were great Finnish patriots."

I could see that Professor Sauri's attitude would not have

changed if I had reminded him that Ryti was the man who signed a personal pact with Ribbentrop in 1941, committing Finland to continuing what was already a hopeless war.

A few days after my conversation with Professor Sauri, I learned an interesting fact about him. During the war he had actively recruited volunteers from among his students for the German SS. Many of them had now returned to Finland and were again taking lessons from him.

This was only the first of several such incidents. One day the editor of a new Finnish literary magazine invited me to lunch at a black-market restaurant. During the course of a sumptuous meal, he spoke with deep feeling of the difficult conditions in Finland.

Indeed, conditions outside this restaurant were difficult. I had been experiencing them to some extent by living on the ration tickets given to me at Turku. They were higher than the normal rations. Yet I had been able to get only some black bread that crumbled like sawdust, a tasteless fish, some stew and potatoes, and a muddy ersatz coffee without sugar or cream. While he spoke of privations, two waiters spread a smorgasbord on the table. When we had finished that, they served us an excellent fowl and some white bread and butter. This was the first black-market restaurant I had encountered in Europe. I was surprised not only by its elegance but by the bland cynicism with which it operated so openly.

When he had spoken for a while about Finland's poverty, the young man turned his attention to America. He was the secretary of a Finnish-American society, he stated proudly. He went on to talk at length about the close ties between Finland and the United States, and explained that he had himself visited America on what he called the greatest trip of his life. The only country that Finland could turn to now, he said, was the United States. If it came to a showdown, he said, smiling meaningfully,

the United States would not let a sister democracy down, would she? We finished the meal with some brandy and he paid a bill which was equivalent to a month's salary of a Finnish worker. As we left, he asked if I wouldn't put him in touch with some American authors so that he could help strengthen the cultural ties of the two countries.

That same evening, a member of the American Legation smiled when I mentioned the editor's name, and said, "He's quite a friend these days. During the war he wrote and broadcast the most violent anti-American radio series in Finland."

A few days later I dropped in at one of the largest book stores in the city to buy some magazines. The proprietor came toward me smiling and bowing. "I get a great pleasure out of seeing Americans come here," he said in English. "It makes me feel that we're not entirely forgotten by the West."

He followed me around the store. When I stopped at a table of German-language books, he stood by while I examined one or two. I could find no familiar books. Most were by writers unknown to me. Several were marked Leipzig, 1941, and had a tiny swastika imprinted on the title page. The dust jacket of one book showed a German air force officer kissing his sweetheart. I leafed through it and found that it was the story of the Luftwaffe's heroism in the Battle of Britain. "How do you happen to have these here?" I asked the proprietor.

"I still have hundreds left from the days before the armistice." He shrugged. "They still sell well. There is nothing else to buy so people buy books. You see, the Germans gave us excellent discounts so we bought huge quantities of books," he explained. Then he added, "Of course when things change and we can buy in foreign countries again, we'll have all the new English and American books as well."

How was I to feel about all this? The confusion that had begun on the boat, as I read about Kuusamo and realized that I

was feeling sorry for a people who had been the enemy, was now worse than ever.

No sooner did I react in anger to the words of the book-seller than I stood in a small group in front of a department store looking in silence with them at a large map in one of the windows. On it was traced the course of the first shipment of real coffee that had left Brazil for Finland since the end of the war. Each day the cross on the map moved closer to Helsinki and each day the watchers increased. The map had been painted in bright colors and it was obvious that the entire display had been put on with a sense of humor, but the people who stood watching it were quiet and serious. Inside the store, the only goods on sale were some books and a few items made of paper.

On the day I learned about Professor Sauri's activities during the war, I walked into the kitchen of the small hotel in which I lived to brew myself some Nescafé. An old woman was the only person there. She placed a copper kettle on the stove and then returned to her work, washing the serving table. I struck up a conversation in German. She spoke a Kurland dialect, rolling her r's. "Why did you want to come to Finland?" she asked. "I wouldn't if I lived somewhere else. What good is it here? We were always small and poor and now we're smaller and poorer." She watched wonderingly as I put the powder into the water. I offered her a cup. She lifted it to her nose and inhaled deeply. "Real. Smells real." She winked at me. "That would bring in a few thousand marks on the black market. A man came from Sweden and brought a little box of saccharine and I got five thousand marks for it. That's much more than I earn here in I don't know how long." She waved her hand in the air.

She went on scrubbing the table and talking. "How can one work like this when there is nothing to eat? And now we don't even have one room to ourselves to sleep."

"What do you mean?" I asked, puzzled.

"The Carelians. Twenty thousand of them came here and we

had to make room for them. There isn't an extra bed anywhere."

"Whose fault do you think it is that things are so bad?"

She waved her hand in disgust. "What do I know whose fault? It's bad, that's all I know. My fault, your fault, their fault, it doesn't make any difference." Her coffee was getting cold.

I walked through an unpainted hall to my room. As I got into bed between coarse paper sheets, I wondered who had been defeated—the men like Sauri or the woman in the kitchen?

"I'm afraid I couldn't tell you how I find Finland, Dr. Hitonen. I don't remember ever having been so confused."

The two men sitting on a low sofa opposite me laughed. One was my host, the editor of a moderately liberal newspaper. The other was a friend of his, a youth in his early twenties.

"In that case you belong with us," said Dr. Hitonen. "We're just as confused and yet our problems here are fairly simple."

The boy raised his eyebrows.

Hitonen continued: "First of all and most important, we are defeated and we must pay reparations to the Russians." He turned to the youth. "Ino, who's very bitter on the subject, can give you all the statistics from memory."

The young man nodded. "I can recite them in my sleep. The reparations come to about 15 per cent of our national income. We have to pay three hundred million dollars in machinery, wood products, ships and other transports within the next seven years. This means that more than 40 per cent of our entire industry must be devoted to reparations. We had to build new plants to meet the machinery and metal requirements."

At this point Dr. Hitonen interrupted. "But of course these plants will be useful to us when we've paid our debts."

"But even then, Dr. Hitonen, our difficulties won't end. You forget that we've lost 10 per cent of our food-producing territory, we lost the city of Viborg and the naval base of Perkkela."

Hitonen looked at the boy sternly. "True enough, those are

our losses. We have no right to continue being bitter about them. We're fortunate that we're not occupied and that we can still run our own government."

The boy replied slowly. "All the same, they're pretty drastic. These reparations mean that we can't hope to improve our own lot for the next ten years. We can't import food, we can't produce textiles for ourselves, we can't rebuild. The standard of living just goes down and down. Many people feel that it's a heavy price to pay for betting on the wrong horse."

"Do you really think that it was just a matter of a bet?" I asked.

"Unfortunately too many do," Hitonen replied "In the winter war most people in the country were honestly fighting for their independence and nothing else. As a matter of fact, it was the liberal elements who led that fight. And we felt that the whole democratic world was behind us. When we were defeated there was a complete collapse of spirit. People were embittered. As is usual in such times, the reins slipped out of the hands of the liberal leaders. I felt it myself. I felt that I might easily lose my own newspaper. I saw my friends in the government replaced or changing their point of view to stay. Nationalism, of course, was at its worst. When small groups of us, who had been meeting for years, got together we no longer trusted each other.

"Reaction took over. By the time the war between Germany and Russia broke out they had complete control. What happened next is all too well known. Finland was in the war before she could stop to consider the possible consequences. Hitler did the job for her, you remember, by simply announcing in a speech that Finland was his ally, and the Soviets settled it by bombing Helsinki. Before long, not only were we in the war, but we were actually advancing into Soviet territory and crying that we were going to build a greater Finland for the greater glory of our people." The editor shook his head. "I wonder

why it happens that people and nations get so ambitious once they have one or two small successes. There was a strange atmosphere in those days. People swelled with pride because they had advanced a few miles into enemy territory and thought that with this act they had secured their future. Well, the price of that bit of glory is dear today."

I had noticed the young man shifting uneasily in his chair. Now he burst out on the heels of Dr. Hitonen's words

"That's all very easy to say. But where does it leave people like me? And there are hundreds, thousands of us. I was with the army up north in 1939. My comrades were good free men who had left their farms to defend them. But they lost them. Most of us returned crippled and hungry. All we could remember out of that war was that we had been attacked, that our villages were looted and burned. When the second war came, how could anyone expect us to stop and think whether we were on the German side or not? We went to fight the enemy who had attacked us before. The Finn doesn't think in terms of Nazism or Communism."

He was pale and every nerve seemed to twitch in his thin face. "It's easy to say we must suffer because we are guilty. Most of us are as guilty as I am. It doesn't help us to know that Rytö was a traitor and Tanner was weak. How can we be cool and intellectual about it and say, 'Well, if Russia hadn't attacked Finland, Leningrad would have fallen and the whole war would have changed'? Say it to the thousands of Karelians right here whose children are dying of tuberculosis and who'll never go back to their homes."

He calmed down slightly. "I try to be reasonable but it doesn't answer all the questions for me. If our leaders were responsible why didn't people like you, Hitonen, do something about it? It was your job to keep them out—you were the progressives. You all scream at Finnish youth for being reactionary. You say that the youth are nationalist. But what do you offer

them? How are you going to get us out of the mess we are in now? The same people who, you say, caused our troubles, are still walking around and they're louder than you are. At least they have an emotional appeal to the youth. They give them nationalism. What do you do except condemn us and tell us we have to pay a debt for the mistakes you've made?" He stopped abruptly

Hitonen sat in silence for a moment and then replied, "I'm afraid that much of what you say is right. I'm willing to take some of the blame. But the only thing a liberal in Finland today can advise is pay off the debt. If we look for any other way out, we're lost "

As I walked out I thought 'They're lost one way or the other. It seemed to me they had stopped thinking. They could only look back and tell themselves what a tragedy they were.

The street was pitch dark. In order to get to my hotel I had to pass the Tornå. Everyone talked about the Tornå. It was the seat of the Russo-British Control Commission. In Sweden they called it the Kremlin of Helsinki and when Finns talked about their troubles they pointed to the Tornå. I looked at it now, an innocuous-looking building on a narrow street. A small uncovered bulb burned weakly over the doorway. A Finnish policeman walked back and forth on the sidewalk.

It seemed to me that Finland's trouble was not the Tornå. I had been told in Sweden that Finland was under control bordering on terrorism, that not only were anti-Soviet elements being relieved of their jobs, jailed, and tortured, but that no one dared express his true sentiments on any subject openly. The irony of it was that the same information was given to me openly by many Finns right here in Helsinki itself, beginning with my hotel clerk and ending with Professor Sauri. It occurred to me that the professor was lucky to be a Finn rather than a Norwegian, because in Norway he would have been jailed as a collaborator or ostracized.

I crossed the street to ask the Tornio guard how to get to my hotel. I spoke to him in poor Swedish, hoping that he would understand. I knew that Swedish and Finnish were spoken interchangeably in Helsinki, all street signs were in both languages. He shook his head vigorously, however, and said, "Suomi—Suomi," which meant Finnish or Finland.

A man coming out of the building stopped and listened for a moment. "You speak English, yes?" I nodded. He motioned to the guard. "What he means is—in Finland speak Finnish." He grinned, gave me my directions, and walked away. He spoke with a heavy Slavic accent and I guessed he was a Russian.

Hella Wuolijoki received me in her smartly furnished apartment in the diplomatic section of Helsinki. She was a chubby gray-haired woman in her sixties. Sitting on her satin sofa with her short legs off the floor and her round cheeks continuously crinkled in a smile, she looked nothing like the woman of accomplishments that I had expected to see.

She was one of the most talked about people in Finland. It was she who had in both wars gone to Stockholm to meet the Soviet ambassador and discuss the possibilities of an armistice. She had been arrested in Helsinki during the second war and sentenced to death. The collapse of the Rytö government had saved her and now she was back in public life as chief of the Finnish radio. Her big job, she said, was to re-educate the Finns.

"It is a big job. They don't know at all why all this happened to them. All they know how to do is blame the Russians and feel sorry for themselves." She was a picture of bouncing energy. She waved her hands in the air and hurried back and forth in the luxurious room, answering the telephone, calling to her maid, and urging sandwiches and cakes on me.

"But they hate me," she went on laughing. "They don't like to be told what's wrong with them. They're stupid and stubborn." She said with disgust, "The press is almost totally re-

actionary, and if it's not, it's just dull. That's the trouble we have over at the radio. They're all so dull. They don't know how to dramatize the situation. I try to teach them, I try to tell them not to write a speech every time they have to say something, but they can't learn." She threw up her hands in despair and exclaimed dramatically, "I can just say that it is hopeless. They don't want to know about their guilt. They don't want to understand what they did. I am trying to do what I can, but I can't do it single-handed and I don't get any support for my work."

"How would you do it if you could get the support?" I asked

She burst out laughing and began pacing up and down the room. "I know how I would do it. I'd use our theater, our radio, our press, our literature for one thing only—to point out to the stupid Finn what he did. I wouldn't let them waste all the paper, energy, and time on all the other foolish things." She turned her grandmotherly face toward me to let the importance of her words sink in.

I was sorry that I couldn't share her enthusiasm. It seemed so genuine. I knew that ever since the end of the war she had devoted herself to this work. She was on dozens of committees, she lectured, wrote, and sat in on government councils. Though she was well over sixty she worked twelve and fourteen hours a day. And she was the only one of her kind.

Yet it seemed to me that there was a flaw. With all her passion and plans, all she actually wanted to do was to give the people more and more of what they already had and were sick of. I thought of the young man at Dr. Hitonen's who had spoken so bitterly about all those who could do nothing but cry guilty. Somehow it was pathetic. She talked warmly of re-education but disgustingly of the people she wanted to re-educate. I felt that she was out of touch—just as this room, with its satin sofas and magnificent china, was out of touch with the

crowded room of the old woman in the hotel kitchen, and just as the salmon sandwiches and sweet cakes and the real coffee were out of touch with the daily rations of Helsinki

The night before I left Helsinki I attended the concert of the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra which had come to the city with its conductor Mravinsky on a goodwill tour. The small auditorium was crowded with Finns, and the first sizable gathering of Russians that I had seen in Finland. The atmosphere was festive.

Despite their shabby clothes, the Finns talked animatedly about the concert and clapped enthusiastically after each number. The Russians were apparently diplomats and members of the Control Commission with their families. In the back rows sat some Soviet and Finnish officers and soldiers. The Russians seemed reserved and shy. During the intermission they stood around the lobby in small groups talking quietly but proudly of their great conductor and orchestra. The women had obviously put on their best clothes for the occasion, but the effect was far from elegant. Most of them wore short, mangy-looking fur pieces. Their dresses were a mixture of styles and years. Few had matched colors. They behaved with careful politeness. They stood aside for Finns to pass, spoke quietly to the check-room attendant. I had the impression that they were adhering to a little booklet telling them how to behave abroad. There was nothing to indicate that these were the "people from the Tornu."

The hall was too small for Tchaikovsky and the power of the orchestra. But the Finnish audience gave them a standing ovation and called the gangling conductor to the podium a dozen times.

As I was leaving, a local Tass representative whom I had met a few days earlier touched me on the shoulder and spoke to me in Russian.

"How did you like it?"

"Fine," I replied.

He shook his head. "The orchestra was good but the hall was too small. It made it sound too loud. You should hear them in Leningrad. Of course the poor Finns couldn't give them their regular concert hall." He smiled. "But we can't complain, because we bombed it."

He asked me to join him for some food at a nearby restaurant. I was anxious to talk to him and accepted. He was a young man with a calm face and a casual manner. He seemed clear about his ideas and answered my questions slowly and with well-chosen words. The way he dragged the syllables of the Russian words, I guessed that he came from somewhere in the Don basin.

"How do you, as a Russian, feel about Finland?"

"I hate the reactionary elements and I like the Finnish people. I am sorry for them. They're very poor now."

"I met several of these reactionaries," I said, "and wondered whether you were going to do anything about them."

He shrugged. "That's the affair of the Finnish government. They're no danger to us. We're not concerned about them."

It seemed to me that what he said was true. It was obvious that the Russians did not care about Nazis or pro-Nazis in Finland. I had been annoyed, remembering what a stir they had made about the failure of the Western Allies to denazify their zones in Germany.

He went on. "As long as the Finns pay their reparations on time, they can do whatever they please, we don't care."

"Wouldn't the whole picture in Finland change if reparations were somewhat reduced? Parts of the country are on the verge of starvation," I said.

He nodded. "Yes. Things are very bad for the poor. They have no food, no houses, and no clothes, but it can't be helped."

"It seems to me," I argued, "that if you lowered the repara-

tions it might give the liberal forces some hope and the government a chance to strengthen the economy."

"We can't be sentimental. We must get the reparations. We need them. As General Zhdanov said when a delegation of Finns came to him to complain, 'Three hundred thousand Russians died at Leningrad and the Finns took part in that siege.'"

He looked at me calmly. "They can have their reactionaries if they want them, they can have their nationalists. We don't care. As long as we get our reparations," he repeated firmly. "We need them."

The Alchemists

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

THREE DIFFERENT HEMS showed from under her heavy black overcoat—a flimsy red print, a dark blue wool, and a brown-and-white check. The young girl noticed my curious gaze and began to tug at her waist. One by one the blue wool, the red print, and the brown-and-white check disappeared under the even hem of the black coat. Now they bulged on her chest, giving her slender figure a crippled appearance.

The girl was standing in a group of other strangely dressed people from whom came a medley of exclamations and minced sentences in what I took to be Hungarian. A boy in a bright new leather coat gesticulated. A man with one blue-glass eye ran his fingers nervously through his hair. The Swedish attendant handling the Stockholm-Prague flight patiently answered their questions.

These were displaced persons returning to Hungary or Slovakia from German camps. They had been in Sweden long enough to rest and get some clothes. Now it developed that there would be room for only twenty of them on this particular Prague plane. The girl in the three dresses spoke to me in the sing-song broad-voweled German of the eastern part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. "I will be happy to sit on my

think if they only let me go. My husband is waiting for me in Budapest. I've been waiting here for a plane over six weeks. I have no more money and no place to go, now that I've given up my room here."

A voice sounded through the loudspeaker. They hushed each other and listened intently. One by one twenty names were called and the chosen group pushed ahead to the customs desk carrying their cardboard suitcases, straw baskets, and paper packages. There was more commotion at the passport control office. Long sheets of paper came out of vest pockets and handbags. Most of them were yellow and crumpled and stated that so-and-so was a displaced citizen of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Subcarpathian Russia or some other country.

Not all of them could be sure that their papers were good, most of them had had to change citizenship two or three times in the past twenty-five years. The man with the blue-glass eye looked at my passport and addressed the young girl. "A booklet like that, what a difference it makes. This piece of paper I have—I never know whether it's good or not. I come from a small town—it was Austrian, then after the last war Slovakian, and in 1938 it became Hungarian and now it is not yet decided whether it is Slovakian, Hungarian or Russian."

The girl eyed me enviously and sighed. "It says on this paper here that I am Hungarian and that I come from Budapest, so what?" She smiled. "*Ein Amerikanischer Pass, ja, was fuer ein Glueck*"

There was a stir at the passport office window. Sure enough, a young woman's paper did not specify that she could go through Czechoslovakia. "I don't know. They gave me this and said I could go home on this plane." She twisted her fingers. "What now? Where shall I ask?" She would have to go to the Hungarian Consulate, then to the Czechoslovak Legation, finally, when a few more stamps had been placed on her white paper,

she would be able to reserve passage and wait another two months.

We finally boarded the plane, a rusty black converted Junker 88, which the Czechs had taken over from the Germans. Two benches lined the sides. The DP's were silent now. They followed instructions and fastened their safety belts. Most had never flown before and their faces were pale.

When we were airborne, their excitement returned. They all began to talk at once. They passed around candy and oranges, apples and small cakes. A brown-haired woman flashed the one gold tooth in her bare gums "Eat, you won't get it in Doborzys, you won't get anything there My brother wrote me that breakfast costs a million pengas, lunch two million, dinner three million." Her friends laughed The boy in the leather coat balanced his way through the aisle stepping on toes and causing a general outburst of curses They shouted to each other, "It's Germany now Look, we're over Germany." It was like riding a sight-seeing bus full of children at a fair. They twisted in their seats to look out the windows, gesticulated, munched their food, tossed apples at each other and conversed with the speed and disorder of children

I was sitting next to a middle-aged woman in a well-cut suit which did not bulge. She opened a powder compact, put too much powder on her white cheeks and forehead, smeared lipstick unevenly on her thin lips, and then leaned toward me and said in English, "Madame, you must excuse this. This is what remained. We are not all like this Unfortunately, the best were gassed and killed. What can one do, madam? You understand" I didn't tell her that all I understood was that perhaps this was the first time in her life she could feel superior

The sun streamed through the plane windows. Sweaters and coats came off again There was a smell of food and cigarettes and sweat The man with the glass eye snored loudly in his corner. His open overcoat revealed striped formal trousers which

were missing two buttons. The young girl pulled off her coat and sweater. The necklines of her three dresses showed. Most of the bare arms were tattooed with concentration camp numbers. The hands were coarse and the fingers stubbed.

The excitement fell away. The lady with the gold tooth spoke aloud in German to no one in particular. "I don't want to go back. But it's one way of ending a temporary existence. In the war we lived from day to day. It was all temporary. One camp, another camp, one city, another city. To an end with it. At least I'll go back and stay there for good . . ."

It was getting hotter and stuffier. The air was rancid. A pock-marked woman became sick and her neighbor followed. An old lady sobbed, "Why am I going? There is nobody left."

"Oh, make this machine stop, it's my end," cried the elegant woman next to me. Her dyed red curls, hanging comically from under a little fur cap, bounced as she suddenly bent forward and held a handkerchief to her face. The white powder wore off. Her face changed color, and two thick veins stuck out on her temples.

The young boy jumped suddenly and woke the glass-eyed man. "Papa, my pass, my pass! I haven't got my pass."

The heat and illness were forgotten. "Anybody see his pass?" They began rummaging in the food packages and under the benches. "Look in your brief case," his father suggested. It was there.

The older man raised his bony arm and, with a gusto that seemed to release all his pent-up emotions, slapped the boy across the face. This outburst appeared to relieve the tension among the rest of the passengers. There was no more shouting or moaning. They continued to be sick in silence or stare out the window at the contours of Prague just coming into view.

I saw the massive head of Ada Hoffmeister. His brown hair was combed back except for a few unruly strands which hung

down the side of his forehead. I missed the long cigar which usually poked from under his bushy mustache. His dark eyes twinkled as he kissed me on both cheeks and clasped my hands firmly. The usual passport formalities did not take long. An official looked at my place of birth and asked whether I spoke Russian. "Of course. Do you?"

"No. But we Slavs can understand each other."

"In that case," said Hoffmeister, "you can let her go through."

The official nodded. "You have many good cigarettes, no?" I'll have one." We all had a smoke while he marked the bags clearing me through.

As we were leaving the depot I saw my fellow passengers crowding into the tiny reception room. They looked exhausted. They were asking questions, running from telephone booths to money exchange desks, inquiring about accommodations, and worrying once more about whether they'd be able to move on. For most of them this was only the first leg of the journey. Many had twenty-four or more hours of traveling ahead of them. My last glimpse was of the man with the glass eye gesticulating at his son.

Hoffmeister's little Tatra car nosed onto the highway. The May sun streamed on the fields. Here and there a man or woman stood working a piece of ground. Low hills rolled away ahead of us. I knew that we would come coasting into Prague down these hills.

"It looks so peaceful here," I remarked.

"Yes, doesn't it? But I think you'll find more excitement than you can take. Things are 'cooking,' as we used to say in the States." He turned and beamed at me.

The car halted to let a train pass. A tall Bohemian peasant, chewing a corn-cob pipe, stood beside a worn-out horse. The wagon full of produce was covered with burlap. I might have left him there in 1937. There was no imprint of war on him,

and I felt like speaking to him if only to thank him for not having changed /

We were approaching the city. The smell of lilacs was everywhere in Bubenec, the residential section at the outskirts of the Old City. I had once had a stuffy old aunt who lived here. My cousin and I had visited her for tea and been served hot chocolate and whipped cream with Vienna pastries, and tiny crisp Prague rolls. Family portraits had hung in a big, formal room. The old lady, in her black lace and a velvet choker, had frightened us. We broke a pastry dish and I don't think we were ever asked there again. We knew that, to preserve the tradition and appearance of the Bubenec house, she starved all week, she would dress in a peasant kerchief and wander through the markets selling her shawls and dishes and vases and rings. On Sundays visitors received hot chocolate and tried not to notice the moth-eaten furniture, the tarnished silver, and the peeling walls. She died about a year later, clutching a miniature of Franz Joseph in her bare hands. A day after her death, creditors came and auctioned off the house with everything in it, including the miniature of Franz Joseph, which turned out to be an old newspaper clipping framed to look real.

The one-family houses looked the same now with their lilac and jasmine bushes in full bloom. Flags hung from every house, the Czech flag next to the Soviet flag. I laughed, thinking of the old lady's house draped with a red flag. "Ada, do the inhabitants of Bubenec line up to sing the 'International' every morning, or are the red flags their only concession to the new times?"

"Most of the old Bubenec families, the Austrian and German ones, are no longer here. Many of these houses belong to our ministers and other government employees. Here is the house of my boss, Kupeckı. He's the Minister of Information."

"Then there is a new Bubenec aristocracy?" Ada laughed good-humoredly at the gibe.

Just as I had expected, we coasted down a steep hill into the

streets of the Old City. The view was breathtaking—the Vltava wide and glistening in the sun, the four bridges connecting the Old City with the New, and the shining towers of the castles of the Kings of Bohemia. It was all there as I had left it—the curved, narrow streets, the many-sainted Charles Bridge which could not show the attrition of war for it was old age itself, the majestic Hradczany Castle. There was a legend about every chapel and bridge and I had learned them all when I first came here at the age of thirteen. A shoemaker on a tiny cobblestone street—the Street of the Alchemists—had told me about the assassination of Wenceslas and the martyrdom of St. Loretta while he fixed my soles. I wondered whether the Street of the Alchemists had changed.

Hoffmeister's jovial voice interrupted my reminiscences. "This is where we are celebrating this week. The whole city took part in the May Day parade."

We were on Narodní Trida, the main street. It was busier than I had ever seen it. People rushed about on foot, in little Tatrás and broken down Skodas. The overcrowded streetcar was here too. Every building was draped in Czech and Soviet flags. Large pictures of Benes, Masaryk, and Stalin stared from every corner. Banners and reviewing stands were going up. The hammering drowned out the voices of vendors selling goat cheeses and *roll-mops* (pickled herrings). The words, REVOLUCE PRACE, MAY 5, 1945-1946, VOLNOSC, could be seen embroidered, charcoaled, printed, and written on flags and posters from one end of the street to the other. People thronged the stores whose show windows were full of banners and pictures alongside stacks of khaki UNRRA cans.

Hoffmeister's enthusiasm matched the gusto on the streets. "Here you are. We're really going to celebrate—a whole week. This month of May, 1946, will be something to remember. May first, then the anniversary of the Revolution, then V Day, and finally the elections on the twenty-fifth." I wondered if the ex-

citement was real? It contrasted so violently with everything I had seen in Europe so far

"The people are lively these days," Ada was saying, as if to convince me "The Prague Revolution got into their blood." I didn't admit my ignorance, but I didn't know what revolution he was referring to

We drew up at the Alcron Hotel where Hoffmeister left me "You unpack and rest We'll see you later."

The lobby of the Alcron was faded The only people in it now seemed to be Americans They were mostly businessmen who made a sad contrast to the excitement of the street outside They sat at small tables in the lounge chewing cigars and sipping coffee or vermouth Most of them looked disgusted Their clothes were as out of place as they themselves, particularly their bright ties A middle-aged man in a Glen-plaid suit bellowed so that most heads turned, "I don't know why the hell anyone comes here, anyhow They haven't got the goods you want and they're asking prices no one will pay I told these fellows that we were going to get our floor-coverings somewheres else"

His companion nodded agreement "They're too busy celebrating all the time Why don't they get down to work again and do some business? It's a year after the war They've lost initiative That's what it is, initiative, business sense They used to have it before the war They're going to the dogs"

A tall man at another table spoke just as disgustedly "I've been coming here for fifteen years They had good stuff, these Czechs In costume jewelry they beat France and Belgium Cheap, too Now they want nine times the prewar rate for a gross of junk We can't sell it What gets me so mad is that they just don't give a damn"

"That's right They don't seem to care at all As though business just went out of business They chased the Germans out Now they don't have anybody to produce that stuff, that's what it is," another spoke with authority His companions listened

attentively. "Even this hotel doesn't care about you. You'd think we didn't fight the war the way they treat us."

The waiters stood politely at attention. I wondered whether they understood and what they thought. Johnny, the half-American reception clerk, snickered good-humoredly as I signed in. "We're used to that. American buyers don't think much of Czechoslovakia these days. We haven't any dollars, our plumbing isn't as good as it used to be, and we want to get paid for what we do. There is a change in the country and it's not just that there is no jewelry." He smiled. "The beer isn't very good, the food could be better and the women aren't as well dressed as they were in the old days. But maybe they're sore because they have to do right by Johnny to get a room at the Alcron." He winked and turned to a customer at the other side of the desk. "There isn't a single room available in the entire city. You better come back after the excitement is over."

Excitement. The word went around in my head as I sat in a lukewarm bath gazing at the apologies of the National Board of Hotel Managers. "Do excuse the lack of hot water. Our coal must last." What was the excitement? I knew that the country was undergoing a drastic change, that it was on the road to socialism. I had heard about the nationalization of industry and the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans. I had expected to find a grim, hard-working people with no time for celebrations.

Later I walked up Vaclavske Namesti, the wide boulevard in the center of the city. It was growing dark now and the flags on the buildings looked purplish. A loudspeaker on the street corner blared loudly. "A half hour of Red Army music to honor the victorious armies which liberated Prague." I turned the corner hoping to be able to find my way to the Hoffmeister flat.

"Prosim, prosim," the Hoffmeister's maid Anna bade me enter. Her round figure moved swiftly into the walnut-paneled

living room. "Pan Hoffmeister no here—" She looked up at the ceiling and put a plump finger to her head, searching for the word. She was all circles, her figure, her round face, the round nose, and the smooth hair combed back on her round head

"I can understand you when you speak Czech slowly," I said. "You don't have to strain."

"But I must learn English. Yes, I learn, yes, I learn." She laughed "I have books. Pan Hoffmeister and Pani learned me speak English." She broke into Czech now "Man must learn. All his life he must learn I am a simple woman but I learn and learn and teach other simpler women. In the daytime I cook, clean and learn I have all kinds of cooking books from many foreign countries. Because I must make good food Evenings I have club meetings and reading. Man must learn Man doesn't know anything. Maybe he knows more than before the war, but nothing" Anna was obviously on her favorite subject and she went on without prompting from me. "I have been here many years with Pan Ada and before with his Maminka and I always learn Look at these books" She made a circular motion toward the books that lined the walls of the living room "You can see my room I have only books, too."

She took my arm and led me through the hall, which, like the living room, was full of books and paintings Her room was at the back, beyond the kitchen As she had said, there were books everywhere, on the window sill, the dresser, and even the bed

"There is so much to read. Look All languages Czech, French, English I must read to know and make the blind people see"

Back in the living room I offered her a cigarette She accepted hesitantly and sat down. She inhaled clumsily, holding the cigarette in stiff fingers

"Pan Hoffmeister and Pani will come soon They must because I must go to a meeting"

"What sort of a meeting is it?"

"A party meeting. A woman's club where I talk to them."

"Are you a Communist?"

"Ano, naturally. I've been a Communist seventeen years. Ano, seventeen years. Now it is open and free to be Communist. Before the war simple people didn't want to be Communists. They didn't read, they didn't know. They were afraid. Now the meetings are full every time. I talk too much."

She held her cigarette to her lips again and took a short puff. "Nice here, no? I kept it all like it was for Pan Ada to come home"

"How did you manage that? I thought the Germans were in the flat during the war"

"The Germans were here but they got nothing, not a thing. Before they came, I put everything away. They never found it. A Gestapo man lived here. And I, a Communist, lived here, too" She chuckled. "I told them this was my flat. They lived with me, not me with them. When Heydrich was killed and there was trouble and they arrested everybody I knew, I said to myself, Anna, now you must go too. I packed a kerchief and went to the village. There was work. Children, hundreds of children. Their parents were in the Concentraks. Jewish children had to be hidden by non-Jewish Czechs. Oh, yes, there is much to tell about. I knew Pan Ada was safe in America. The radio and underground papers told us. When the Red Army came last May and the Prague Revolution began, I came back here. I waited for Pan Ada."

There was the sound of a key in the door. She moved as if to jump up, then reconsidered and simply turned her head to see who was there. She remained in her chair, uncomfortable and self-conscious, when Ada entered the room. She mumbled something about entertaining the lady and finally rose, hiding her embarrassment by saying to me, "He maybe doesn't like it." Her heavy bosom shook with laughter as she walked out of the room.

"Anna is the best entertainment the Hoffmeisters can offer. But she's complete dictator of this household and Lilly and I have no say" Ada settled in a comfortable chair and lighted one of the cigars I had brought him "This is one of the things, though not the only one, I miss about America" He drew a deep puff. "Well, Edith, but I think this is the new world now."

"Judging from all the red flags it certainly seems a different world," I remarked

He was serious. "It is not what you think. Czechoslovakia is not Soviet. Before I say anything else, though, I want you to know that you don't have to take what I tell you for granted. After all, I am a Communist and that prejudices me" He winked. "You can go wherever you want to go, see whomever you want to see. You may hear criticism and grumblings but you'll find that most people, no matter what party they belong to, believe in what is going on in Czechoslovakia"

"You've already gone pretty far, haven't you? I understand that you've nationalized 80 per cent of your industry and carried out some drastic reforms"

"Yes, we've gone far. Every factory of over five hundred workers is the property of the State. We're expropriating German industry and expelling the Germans, we're planning a school reform, we're going to improve our land reform"

"Has there been much opposition?"

"No. You must remember that this is all within the framework of the Kosice program. That was a four-party coalition program signed before the liberation. We still have a coalition and no matter which party wins this month's elections the coalition will continue. Of course there are differences, but these are mainly in degree and speed. The Communists and the Social Democrats, who have a Marxist point of view, want to go further and faster in nationalization than the Czech Socialists or the Catholics, who are non-Marxists and want to stop now."

"I suppose the ultimate aim is a Socialist state."

He shook his head. "Not if you mean the Soviet kind of Socialism. Even we Czech Communists believe that Russia's path to Socialism is not the only one. All of us here, when we talk about nationalization, or socialization, mean something that is Czech—call it Czechoslovakization, if you want to. As President Benes put it, it won't come from Moscow or London or China. It'll be our own." As he spoke, he pointed the cigar at me to emphasize his arguments.

"It all sounds very convincing," I said. "Perhaps even too convincing. And you sound confident. What you're trying to do is carry out a great experiment, as I see it. Will you be able to do all this under present world tensions? I was in London at the United Nations Conference and it certainly did not look very pleasant there. Can you keep from allying yourselves too closely with one side?"

"That's the biggest problem. I won't say that we want to be the bridge between the East and West, as so many small countries say, because too many people walk on bridges." He smiled. "We are in the East but we don't want to close our eyes to the West. Unfortunately, I think America doesn't want to understand that."

At this point Lilly Hoffmeister entered. We hadn't seen each other since she had returned from the States with Ada six months earlier. There were the usual greetings and excited questions about America.

She unpacked a box of lipsticks, stockings, and some cheese that I had brought from Stockholm. "We don't need any of the food that our friends are still sending us from New York. We have plenty. But these are the real necessities for us." She spread them out delightedly on the couch. "Ada and I left America equipped with vitamins, medicines and heavy shoes and tweeds, prepared to rough it in a Socialist country. We were completely wrong. What we should have brought was some extra dinner clothes. Like all other government officials, Ada is always be-

ing asked to all sorts of diplomatic receptions, dinners, theater parties and so on." She prattled on as she tried out the lipsticks on the back of her hand.

Hoffmeister smiled somewhat apologetically. "You see the life of a government man here is very difficult."

"Do you ever have time for your drawing?" I asked him.

He shrugged. "Very little. I'm afraid that's a thing of the past."

Lilly looked up. "As a matter of fact," she said, "he's publishing what he calls his posthumous works now."

I looked at Ada sitting comfortably near his desk absently fingering a sheaf of printed papers, probably thinking of meetings, conferences, planning committees, election speeches that he would be delivering in the next few weeks far removed from the world of art in which he had spent most of his life. One of Czechoslovakia's leading satirists and cartoonists, Ada had seemed to me in New York to be the archetype of the continental intellectual and artist. I knew that for years his work had brought him into contact with only people of this kind. He had gone frequently to London, Paris and Moscow to exchange ideas with H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, David Low, Pasternak, Ehrenburg, Aragon. Like many another scion of a well-to-do European family, he had traveled extensively. And here in his custom-designed apartment were the trophies of his travels and interests: massive avant-garde paintings, life-sized primitive figures from New Guinea and the South Sea Islands, polished stone carvings, and in each wall, a specially constructed cubicle filled with primitive figurines from obscure African villages—everything to indicate that for him art was the focal point of life. I had known him in America during the war years as the buoyant artist drinking and talking until dawn. It was a little sad now to see Ada the artist, who had also been something of a radical, converted to Ada the government official, who had once been an artist.

It was chilly when I left the Hoffmeisters'. The streets were empty now. Most of the cafés and restaurants on Vaclavske Namesti were closed. I wondered how many Czechs enjoyed the confidence, hope and comfort of the Hoffmeisters. Were they riding the tidal wave now? And was there a whole new aristocracy being born in Czechoslovakia?

At a nearby shrine an old woman knelt fingering a rosary. A paper boy passed I bought a paper from him and he thanked me profusely for the tip. Most of the city was quiet. The Alcron lobby was also quiet. The Americans had gone to bed or had left in bad humor. The hall porter handed me the key. "There are eggs in Prague this week," he said. "Will you have one for breakfast, miss?"

I walked toward Vinohrady to see if I could find Zdenka Tozickova at her home. I would surely recognize it, for I had stayed with Zdenka and her family during the summer of 1937.

There were not many people in Vinohrady that summer and we had had the house practically to ourselves. Pani Sverckova, the janitor's wife, used to sit on the steps halving ripe pumpkins and gathering up the pits to roast them. The trees were heavy with cherries and chestnut blossoms in the monastery gardens where the monks walked in heavy brown robes despite the hot sun. The river, which we then called the Moldau, swarmed with boats. Tourists on their way to or from Karlsbad or Marienbad, where they went to cure the liver or lose some weight, could be seen everywhere with their guide books studying the old castles. American visitors bought lace and linen and glassware on Narodni Trida. There was an air of leisure about everything, even the streetcars seemed to run slowly. In the evenings we sat at a round table eating *palacinky* with homemade plum jam, while Mr. Tozicka, Zdenka's father, discussed politics with Jan, her older brother. Mr. Tozicka kept a large picture of Masaryk on

his desk and brought his name into almost every political discussion. There was much talk about Germany.

I turned the familiar corner of Marshal Foch Street. There was a new plaque now. Roosevelt Road. The white stand, where we used to buy the famous Prague sausage and eat it as we walked, was no longer there. In its place was a pushcart with sausages suspended from a rod. The familiar spicy smell tempted me but I couldn't buy one now because I had no ration points.

The tempo of the street had changed just as its name had. Everybody seemed to be rushing. Their shoes were worn and their coats were too small. Dresses had shrunk from cleaning and showed bare legs or heavy cotton stockings. The mixture of country and city was more pronounced than ever. Peasants sold colorful shawls, dill pickles, radishes, and cheeses on the sidewalks. Several buildings were pockmarked by bullets. Otherwise there was little damage in the city, except for the cavernous ruin of the Gothic town hall, which the Germans had burned before retreating. Among the flags and banners, I noticed small square metal plaques, each with an inscribed name and date. Sometimes the plaque was nothing more than a piece of wood with a name carved by knife. Fresh flowers and wreaths lay on the ground beside them, and occasionally a wooden cross had been nailed to the wall. There was one not far from the old Tozicka house. "Jan Subka, Boleslaw Dlug-Fell on May 6, 1945—Holy be their memory." A passing woman looked up and crossed herself. Two men rushing by touched their hats automatically.

The old house was just the same. I walked up the steps and rang the bell. A young woman in stocking feet, wearing a bright apron, answered.

"Does Zdenka Tozickova still live here?" I asked.

"Ano, ano. Please come in. I will call her."

Zdenka had changed little since I had last seen her in 1937. Her hair was still long and worn, as she had always worn it,

braided and tied at the back of her head. She was somewhat more reserved and her gray eyes looked darker.

"The story isn't as dramatic as you probably expect," she said as we sat down at the old round table. "When you came to visit us in 1937, you remember, we still didn't want to believe what was happening. We were in the Sudetenland and we refused to pay attention to Henlein's parades. Remember? It all came so suddenly. I was having a good year at the university, I suppose just because I liked Najedly's lectures. I'd saved up enough money to go to Paris and London that September of 1938. Even after it happened, I still didn't feel as if anything had hit me. Things were so shockingly normal at first—preparing to return to the university, moving back from the country. Then suddenly the truth of what had happened hit me hard across the face. It could be seen in the workers at the Skoda plant when I visited Pilsen. It could be seen in the attitude of the postman, in the bitterness of the returning soldiers who had gone off to the border regions prepared to fight. When I talked to one of the soldiers and saw how ashamed he was, I felt personally betrayed and for the first time understood what had happened at Munich.

"Everybody seemed to feel that things were going to keep getting worse. They began getting annoyed with each other. The grocer down the street picked an argument with everyone and then he started getting drunk and said it didn't make any difference anyhow whether his business got better or worse. Things like that happened all up and down the street.

"At home we were so hurt that the word Munich was never mentioned. Everyone's life became his own closely guarded secret. You came and went without saying much. You were somehow preparing, looking for new things, but not disclosing them for fear that they would fail you, too.

"Jan and I didn't see each other much in those days. I wanted

to see him. But sometimes, I think, he didn't trust me enough, and so I had to look for new friends. Most of the girls you and I used to know weren't enough. I suddenly couldn't stand just going to classes, attending lectures, getting dresses made or listening to music. Trud would come around once in a while and we'd go to a play or a lecture but then that stopped, too. I had to find new people who could help me do something about the hurt I felt. There were many who felt the same way and slowly we formed a group at the university. We put out a little paper and talked a lot and that's about all. But at least when they marched into Prague it was not a surprise. We had talked so much about it and expected it.

"We couldn't possibly know how it was going to be. And I don't think there are many who understand even now what it was like. After the first shock was over, many people slowly went back to their normal way of living. That's the strangest thing about occupation. If you don't want to you don't notice much of it, except that there are small changes in your daily life. Your reading habits gradually change, your daily newspapers carry different editorials, your children learn German in school, the legends you lived with all your life about the Hradczyn and Vysygrad assume a new color, the seats of the Kings of Bohemia become the thrones of the Emperors of Greater Germany. And people gradually give in to it. Certain groups are hit immediately. But they are amputated so carefully that the rest of the population hardly feels it. First, the Jews—some people profit by it when the Jews are put away, they get their property and positions and have less competition. Then come other groups. But there is always a large part of the people that remains unaffected. But after a while it spreads to everyone. What hurt most was that people like the farmers, the peasants, hid food from the Germans, then sold it to the Czechs on the black market. At first groups like ours were small

But as the arrests increased and the terror began, we got more and more recruits.

"You asked me earlier this afternoon where the Communists got their strength. Well, in those days, when half the nation was still asleep, it was the Communists who took up the fight. When our groups started, the Communists gave us the lead. They were the most self-sacrificing and they gave us the clearest direction. After Munich and after March, 1939, the rest of the world was still at peace. The youth saw no direction from anybody. The Communists came forward and gave them the signal. Naturally, the party became strong in the underground. Many of my friends joined who never used to think of politics. Their leadership carried over to the peace. They took the initiative in the Koscice program. They kept in touch with the youth all the time. And, of course, when the uprising broke out they gave it the atmosphere of revolution. They knew how to capitalize on the presence of the Red Army, and now they are the strongest party in Czechoslovakia."

I interrupted at this point "You sound slightly ironical about them. Is that the way you feel?"

Zdenka shook her head. "No. As a matter of fact I'm going to vote Communist in the elections. I sincerely admire what they're doing. But I have no intention of trying to join the Communist party. I don't want to be tied to any single party. And there is no need for it because they're all doing a good job together now. The coalition is working out very well. Sometimes I think they're performing miracles. In the midst of a large-scale nationalization, they've managed to keep the standard of living up. We have hardly any black market. Our food ration is decent, our shops are beginning to fill, the factories are running.

"But most of all, the people are excited. They feel that good things are happening in Czechoslovakia. They're beginning to discover that things that were bad before the war don't have

to stay bad. They're willing to experiment. And they go about the whole thing with that spirit

"Look at me I was completely disillusioned by Munich. In the occupation I was dazed for a long time. Today I feel that I can see what's ahead, and it looks good. Most of the people I know feel that way."

Zdenka's voice was warm and confident. Her confidence was contagious, just as the friendly gaiety of the streets of Prague was. I had already heard several Czechs voice the same attitude. I had a feeling that the whole country had made a decision and was carrying it out. The people seemed to know what they wanted and how to get it, something I had not found anywhere else

Prague's first postwar music festival—for that matter Europe's first postwar international cultural event—opened with the solemn playing of "Ma Vlast," followed by cheers as the President of the Second Republic arose in his box to greet the impressive international audience. When the program ended the celebrities left the Rudolfinum—seat of the parliament and now a concert hall for the occasion—and watched President Benes walk to his car amidst the cheers of Czech Socialist youth who thronged the lighted banks of the Vltava. Fireworks flashed on the river, crowds listened to election campaign speeches. The youths formed a torch procession behind the president's car and cried in unison, "Vote Czech Socialist—the Party of President Benes." A group of Communists waved election banners advertising the advantages of their platform. The four bridges over the river had been divided among the four major parties. Each bridge was covered with its own streamers and signs: VOLTE SOCIALNI DEMOKRATI, VOLTE KOMUNISTY, VOLTE NARODNI SOCIALISTI, VOLTE LIDOVÉ DEMOKRATY.

Later everybody who was anybody in music, and many others besides, gathered at the home of Raphael Kubelik, the

lanky young conductor of the Prague Philharmonic. He welcomed his guests with kisses and sentimental outcries. He spoke Czech, French, English, and Russian all at once. But his mixture of languages seemed to have no effect on the guests themselves. At the start of the evening they separated themselves into national groups, each group taking over a corner of the main room, as if it were a political party taking over one of the bridges.

In one corner stood two men politely shaking their heads and smiling vacantly. They wore tightly fitted black suits, white starched collars, and dark ties. They looked like businessmen dressed as newly appointed diplomats. I heard their Russian and guessed that they were the Soviet pianist Obarin and the violinist Ojstrach.

Not far from them stood a noisy group of Frenchmen, waving their hands in the air and shouting positive opinions of the concert. In the third corner several American and British men and women in conspicuously well-cut dinner clothes nodded politely to each other, fingered their cocktail glasses, and looked bored.

In the fourth quarter of the room, Raphael Kubelik was waving his arms in a hearty welcome. "Lenushka, so you are here. Come along." Leonard Bernstein, the young American conductor, sporting a bright bow tie and flinging his hands in the air with the mannerisms of a Hollywood juvenile actor, fell into the arms of Kubelik who kissed him loudly on both cheeks. The Russians grinned and the fine head of the American composer, Samuel Barber, lifted itself ever so slightly in the American corner of the room.

"Now we're all here. We'll have some music. We have our dear cellist of the orchestra who will play for us some Czech works," Kubelik announced, trying to draw the attention of the guests. A thin sandy-haired boy, perspiring heavily, in a tail coat, sat in the center of the room. The cello looked much

too big and heavy for him. "Some works by Janosik," he announced in a shaky voice. He played a sentimental folk tune.

"Czech music We haven't had anything like it for so long," Kubelik sighed as the last tone was struck.

Several Czechs stood in grave silence, deeply moved and happy. The women sniffed audibly.

"Do you realize that Kubelik managed to conduct the Prague Philharmonic for a year without playing a single German composition?" a girl reporter whispered to me in awe "Now we can have as much of our music as we want."

The boy continued to play tune after tune, all of which sounded the same Kubelik darted around the room urging his guests to listen People continued to shake his hand and clap him on the shoulder, congratulating him on his performance at the Rudolfinum He was the hero of the evening. He looked flustered and embarrassed.

A young Englishman sat next to me "It's a strange world. You can't seem to keep politics out of art these days They're all so bent on nationalism now. Slavic music, Eastern music, Western music Kubelik doesn't really like it. I'm sure he's thinking of Tallich tonight and many of the music lovers in the audience thought of Tallich. Tallich is a great conductor and it's not true that he collaborated He belongs here tonight, really."

Mme Shidlov, a Yugoslav ex-opera star, joined our conversation. "Tallich was a great conductor and it is a shame he was banned After all, he refused to play when Goebbels came to Prague And when he went to Berlin it was to keep Czech music alive No doubt Kubelik got his big chance because of that. He's a fine boy. But Tallich will be back"

Here it was again Was playing in Berlin collaboration? Tallich's countrymen apparently couldn't decide Perhaps that was what made Kubelik drink so much.

"Now, Lenushka, play, Lenushka" Kubelik flung his arms

out The groups seemed to have melted into one now. We all stood around the piano Bernstein played boogie woogie. The guests nodded their heads in rhythm. A maid brought in crackers with UNRRA fishpaste. The straw-tasting *Šljivovic* was disappearing fast. Ojstrach and Obarin had unbent and were sitting on the floor next to me, beating out the time. Samuel Barber in his subdued voice asked me to tell the Russians that the American character was not as violent as American music. The Russians laughed Bernstein played continuously. The French threw their arms around each other's shoulders and sang, the Canadians and British danced, the Czechs clapped their hands. I sat between Barber and the Russians, interpreting as they discussed his new cello concerto. Walter Legg, representative of His Master's Voice, made arrangements to record Ojstrach playing the new Prokofieff concerto Tallich was forgotten, the war was behind. A young Czech who only a few minutes earlier had been telling a French girl about Red Army rapes in Moravia crouched next to us and exclaimed: "Isn't it wonderful how we all get along?"

Nobody thought about the four Prague bridges divided into parties, the atom bomb, Soviet expansion, the Revolution Josh White's folk song about the cherry that had no stone brought tears and clapping and shouts for more. I carefully translated the "Empty Bed Blues" to the Czechs and the Russians.

The room was warm and we opened the windows. The sound of Czech youths singing in perfect pitch came from the distance. The youngsters were still parading on the streets outside.

The scrawny waiter ran across the crowded room balancing a tray high in the air. On it stood a lone dish with an ink bottle and pen. Men of all ages sat at bare marble-top tables reading newspapers from the side rack, writing letters, discussing politics, each with a small pot of coffee before him.

The waiter bearing the pen and ink was the symbol of a

tradition, the Central European café. In prewar days one could find them in Vienna, Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw, and they were all the same. Their customers were businessmen, lawyers, politicians and intellectuals. The waiters knew them all and never expected anyone to order more than coffee or to stay less than a few hours

The people now sitting in the Slavia might very well have been there eight years earlier, and I doubted whether the waiters had changed. They still wore the same soiled, shiny dinner coats and striped trousers. You couldn't tell that the liquid in the individual brass coffee pots was not coffee but malt with bitter herbs. Or that the few pastries on display were brittle pepper cookies with a beet-sugar icing, which the steady customers knew better than to order. The only conspicuous change was in the names of the newspapers on the rack. There was no *Berliner Tageblatt* and no *Prager Presse*.

"See that man with the bald head and fat stomach?" I said to my two companions "Look at his gold chain and shiny fingernails. It is incongruous to see him reading the *Svobodne Noviny*. I'd put the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in his hands and be able to spot him immediately as a German businessman visiting Czechoslovakia in 1937."

Leonard Bernstein, who was sitting at my side, looked puzzled. But Dr. Fischel's clean-shaven face broke into an understanding smile.

"So you feel it, do you?" he said "Things are generally the same and most of the changes are good and healthy. But there is something unpleasant." He wrinkled his forehead and looked at each of us as if to decide whether or not to go on. Dr. Fischel, head of the Prague Jewish community, had asked Bernstein and me to join him for morning coffee. "I am glad you are here, Mrs. Sulkin. You were in Czechoslovakia before the war so you will understand what I mean when I say that many of us no longer feel at home here."

"You don't have a Jewish problem in Czechoslovakia, do you?" Bernstein interrupted. "I had heard that there was no anti-Semitism here."

"No. There is no Jewish problem in the Polish sense and the government is doing all in its power to help the Jewish people. But it's the new atmosphere."

"Do you mean the new nationalism?" I asked.

"Yes. Czechoslovakia used to be a country of minorities. Masaryk and Benes were proud of it and we all were. In the 1936 census there were four legal minorities registered and all were Czech citizens. You could be a German, a Czech, a Slovak, or a Jew, and have the same rights in each case. Many Czech Jews registered as Germans at the time because they had been part of the Austro-Hungarian culture. And they had the bond of language and habit. Many registered as Jews—considered a nationality by Masaryk. But now this freedom of choice of nationality is backfiring"

"You must be a Czech in Czechoslovakia, is that it?" I asked. I had noticed this and it had struck me as the strangest paradox in Prague today. Despite the healthy atmosphere and the promising future, the same nationalism which I had seen in Norway and Finland was apparent here.

Dr. Fischel turned to me. "You were saying earlier that you never felt as much at home anywhere in Europe as you did here. That was one of the good things about this country. It is ironical to think that a Czech Jew is not considered a Czech today because he registered as a member of the German or Jewish minority in 1936. His property is considered non-Czech and is subject to immediate nationalization. He has to prove himself all over again now. But this is not the main problem. The property law is being worked out by the government now, and they are trying to restore Jewish property to the rightful owners. But the psychological effects of the new nationalism are unpleasant."

"Do you feel that the Jews are not wanted back in Czechoslovakia?" Lenny asked

Dr. Fischel shook his head "I wouldn't say that. Many Jews who registered as Czechs and who speak the language fluently, have been freely accepted again and are working in the reconstruction along with everyone else. But the Jews who used to live in the Sudeten or Slovakia, to whom Czech was never a mother tongue, are having a difficult time. Of course that is all the result of a national purge of minorities, like the Sudeten Germans and the Hungarians. No matter how justified such a purge may be, it is bound to be *duť*" He shrugged his shoulders "It seems that the Jew is expendable."

I remembered Mrs Schoenfeld, an old friend whom I had visited a few days ago in her one-room apartment She was the only one of her family who had survived Her two daughters would have been about my age She was Czech as far as anyone knew, until a feeling of solidarity made her register as a Jew.

"I am fine," she had said. "Except that it wasn't really worth while returning from Theresienstadt One isn't needed or wanted Six years is such a long time I came back hoping to find many friends happy to see me alive. I went to see my neighbors When I walked in they simply stared and did not recognize me In the room, I saw my sofa, radio, and carpet which I had left with them When I told them who I was they simply said, 'We were sure you died in the Koncentrak' They tried to make it up to me by asking questions about my daughters. But I will never forget the stare of nonrecognition It was as if they were looking at a ghost and asking, 'Where did you come from and why are you back?'"

"I get it from the grocer, from the butcher, from Zlínova, the hat maker, who fingered her order book and said brightly, 'Why, Pani Shoenfeldova, I was sure you were gassed' She showed me her order book 'Here, look, Pani Smirkova, Pani Goldblatova, Pani Grynstemnova—you knew them all—all gassed

—nice ladies they were, too—I didn't expect to see you again. Now, what kind of a hat do you want?' No, nobody expected us back. We were not really missed or wanted."

I heard Dr. Fischel saying slowly to Bernstein, "One of the sad aspects of this situation is that the Jews have very deep roots in Prague. . . ."

The keeper of the synagogue opened the heavy gate with a large key from a bunch he carried in his hand. He was quiet and stern. His black hat matched his suit, his mustache and his eyes. It was chilly in the stone hall.

The only Gothic Jewish synagogue in the world had remained undamaged by the Nazis. The keeper showed us through it wearily. He pointed to the vaults and columns which were eleventh-century Gothic. High under the ceiling odd-looking metal reflectors hung from the walls. The keeper noticed my questioning gaze. "Those the Germans put up and we left them as a souvenir. They used the synagogue as a movie studio. They made funny pictures about the Jews here. We were all Charlie Chaplins." There was no emotion in his voice.

Bernstein was at the altar studying the ancient writings on the Gobelin covers. The man went on, "Not many people come here now. We hold services for the Polish Jews who are here. The Prague Jewish community used to be the pride of the world. Now we are only seven thousand left out of fifty thousand. This little synagogue saw many things in her day and she will see more."

The utter hopelessness of the man's voice was too much to take in the cold stone room, unchanged by time except for the horrible eyes of the reflectors which glared mockingly. We left.

"My name is Maria Podlasiuk and I am going to America." She was one of the four girls sitting at a wooden table in a hut for transient Jewish DP's. They were having their lunch out

of a common bowl and all got up to speak to us. The room had no more than its four bare walls, four bunks and a table and bench. The women varied in age between twenty-five and fifty. For the most part they were Auschwitz alumnae.

Dr. Jacobson of the Joint Distribution Committee, who had brought Bernstein and me to the camp, had explained that it was a camp set up by the JDC as a stopping place for Jews escaping the pogroms in Poland.

It had been drizzling all afternoon and the room was moist. Bernstein continued the conversation with Miss Podlasiuk.

"When are you going to America? Do you have relatives there?"

She laughed. "I am not going to the America you are thinking about. I am going to German America—the American zone in Germany."

"She's happy thinking about it now," said her companion, who wore high leather boots and a heavy sweater. "But actually all she's going to do is change camps. At least she'll be able to stay there." She reminded me of the women on the plane coming to Prague. I was embarrassed as they examined my tailored suit and manicured fingernails.

A young man walked into the room and was introduced as a son of one of the women.

"I am going back to Poland, Dr. Jacobson," he blurted out. "It's enough. Look, what can we do? We got out and spent every cent to bribe the border guards. Now I hear that the ones who got into the American zone last year are still sitting there. We know nobody in America or Palestine. There is no chance for us to go anywhere."

"Monia, I told you not to speak like this any more," said his mother. "Don't listen to him, Dr. Jacobson. We are not going back to Poland. There is nobody left in our town, not one person. They don't want to give our store back. And look at this." She pulled out a letter for us to read. It was in Polish and I trans-

lated it aloud. It was an anonymous note saying that if she returned to Piaskov and tried to reclaim her property she would never see daylight again. "Dr. Jacobson, don't listen to him. He is crazy." She clasped her fingers hysterically.

The other women sat down and began eating their soup. The spoons made a hollow clatter on the aluminum bowls. The barracks were long and low. Each room looked like the next. The inhabitants also looked like each other. The women were spongy and sallow. They sat on their bunks or rummaged through little suitcases. The older ones sat by the windows watching the rain. Some walls were covered with carved signs and names and Hebrew verses. The men were thin. They shot angry glances at us and whispered excitedly as soon as we were out of the way. Some mothers carried rosy children who looked well fed.

"How long have most of them been here?" I asked.

Jacobson chewed on his pipe. "Anywhere from three weeks to six months. They're happy once they get here. But it doesn't take them long to discover that it's just another camp on the way to another camp. And most of them have had enough."

Bernstein, who had been silent throughout, asked, "Do any of them get out to a normal life?"

"Yes. On the underground route to Palestine, if they're not intercepted. Some of them get to America if they have relatives and if their quota isn't full. But that's only a drop in the bucket."

We were passing another barrack. There was a commotion at the door. A group of youngsters ranging from fifteen to twenty stood talking excitedly.

"We're sending a hundred boy orphans between twelve and eighteen to England, and today we're making the selection," Jacobson explained.

There were many more than a hundred boys. All stood clustered around a man seated at a desk. He interviewed them one by one. We spoke to a group of four who were standing aside from the others. They looked healthy, but their clothes seemed

much too small for them, and I thought they acted more childish than they looked. They were Ruthenian Jews. Ruthenia was now part of Soviet Russia and they wanted to stay in Czechoslovakia or leave. We asked them several questions and offered cigarettes. The one who looked the oldest was about to accept but suddenly changed his mind when he saw Jacobson with us.

"No, I don't smoke yet. I am too young," Bernstein and I couldn't help laughing. We understood the ill-fitting jackets and short pants now. These boys were probably nineteen, twenty, and twenty-one and so had no chance of being included in the list of a hundred going to England. But they were going to try, anyhow.

Jacobson smiled as we were leaving. "No price is too high to stop being a DP."

Three hours later Leonard Bernstein stood on the podium of the Rudolfinum conducting his *Jeremiah Symphony* before a brilliant audience. A Czech soprano sang Jeremiah's lamentations in an ancient tongue. From where I sat I could see Bernstein whispering the words to the singer. He didn't want her to miss a single one. In his box President Benes leaned forward and bent his head.

The major-domo apologized profusely in studied English. "I am sorry you will not be able to have high tea later today, but we couldn't bake any of our special cakes. My usual source of butter disappointed me and I didn't know we were going to have so many visitors. But there'll be bread and cheese and jam." He rubbed his hands together. With his buck teeth he looked like a Japanese houseboy bowing and scraping. I could see that some of the group on the terrace wished he wouldn't humble himself so much.

"He certainly takes his job seriously," Hoffmeister commented apologetically. We had just risen from a heavy luncheon and only three hours before that had been served three eggs.

apiece for breakfast. "He's a good man but he lacks tact," Hoffmeister twinkled.

We were sitting on the open terrace of Dobrys Castle, formerly the mansion of Count Collerado Mannsfeld, which had now been nationalized and turned over to the Czech Writers' Syndicate for use as a work resort and week-end resting place. Writers, poets, translators, editors, and all others who dealt with the printed word and held membership in the Syndicate, were privileged to come and go as they pleased in the fifty-room mansion, which still retained most of its eighteenth-century elegance, including three formal salons, two glittering ballrooms and a wing devoted to the bric-a-brac of the hunt.

"I think I'll go up and lie down a bit. Every time I come here I get so sleepy." Madam Wassermanova rose. She was a regular guest at Dobrys. Earlier she had told me that she came there every week end to work on her translations. "I have to come down here from that madhouse Prague, where you can't get anything done." So far I had seen her do nothing but eat and sleep.

"It's pleasant here, isn't it?" Jiri Pober, the secretary of the Syndicate, remarked, looking out over the formalized gardens toward the wide marble steps, flanked by two heavy statues, which led to the hothouses beyond.

"But the gardens should be kept up better than they are," said his wife who was British and spoke with a clipped accent. "The gardeners don't seem to have their hearts in it."

The sun played a steady stream of warmth. A young poet, an aging critic, and a publisher leaned back in their chairs, dozing or gazing sleepily toward the gardens.

"It's a good idea, this Dobrys," Hoffmeister whispered to me. "But I'm afraid it will put an end to writing in Czechoslovakia. They all come here and eat too much and get sleepy and go back. I'm beginning to wonder whether it's a wise thing to bring our foreign friends here. It probably gives a wrong im-

pression altogether." He turned his gaze on the figures lolling in the comfortable chairs "They look like fat sheep, don't they?"

"Ada, I know what bothers you. The revolution has come to Dobrys, but the atmosphere still smacks too much of the days of the decadent counts," I said, laughing

He jumped up and began poking and prodding them out of their lethargy. "Come on, let's go down to the village and see what's going on"

The publisher rose and stretched himself with dignity. "Yes, it's time we showed ourselves to the people." He winked as he came around the table to take my arm.

We crossed the spacious courtyard. It glowed with the pink brilliance of the painted stucco walls. We left the castle in stately procession. Hoffmeister in his doeskin country jacket, swinging a stick in lazy arcs, Lilly Hoffmeister beside him, the poet and the Pobers behind, and the publisher and I bringing up the rear. Two attendants swung the gates deferentially.

"I here are two more castles for the writers. Then the architects have theirs, and so have the lawyers," the publisher said in a rising sing-song voice. "So far, so good. All the syndicates, guilds and associations are satisfied." He smiled good-humoredly. But there was a note of concern in his voice as he went on. "A lot of good has been done in our new Czechoslovakia. I hope it remains good."

"What do you mean?" I asked

"Oh, I mean that I hope we don't lose our perspective, that we don't lose sight of the things around us. It's easy, you know, when you are put into the manor yourself, to forget about the village and to build more hothouses, more lodges, guest houses and garages. Friends come to visit you and you become so concerned with them and their well being that everyone is an outsider, even an enemy. You can expand your manor too far. I have seen it happen."

"Do you see any danger ahead?"

"Not really. Everything is still so new and exciting. And no matter what we do it is a miracle. When you open a plant that has been idle for three years, it is a great achievement. When you can ration food so that everybody gets his ten eggs a month at the regular price, it is good, and when you can send your children to free schools and your old mother to a well-appointed hospital, you swell up with pride.

"I am an old Socialist," he went on, "and probably a bit old-fashioned. We've done a tremendous job in Czechoslovakia. I feel that now is the time to take stock. We have hundreds of factories, villages, and institutions in the hands of national committees. We are sending the Germans out of the Sudetenland and moving thousands of Czechs in there. But there are always a few people who take control of things. Some of these people got into their posts by chance during the confusion of the revolution. We have had a few cases where entire national committees, administering towns, had to be put in jail. Now is the time to clean up, to put everything on solid ground instead of pushing on with further nationalization."

"Isn't that the plan? Doesn't the coalition advocate that?"

He smiled wryly. "If you watch the general platforms of the various parties, they all agree on some points. Their main differences are in how far they want to go and how fast they want to go. My party, the Czech Socialists, for instance, is opposed to the Communists. It's not because of nationalization or expulsion of the Germans, or further land reform. We agree to all those. But we think that the Communists don't want to halt now because they're anxious to establish political control, if they can, even if the people have to suffer for it."

"Do you feel there would be serious changes in the country if the Communists gained more power?"

Ada left Lilly and dropped back with us

"Ada will tell you no. But I say yes." He laughed and slapped

Hoffmeister on the shoulder. "These fellows are fine boys, but I feel that they're liable to get power drunk. If they got control there wouldn't be many changes in the beginning, but they would gradually adopt all the accoutrements of Communism. Take his Ministry of Information. They don't control anything directly now. The newspapers are uncensored. But just let one of us print a series of unfavorable reports about Russia and you'll see how much paper we can get after that. Or let someone make a pro-Churchill broadcast."

Ada was silent. I could tell that he wanted me to hear the opposition.

"I feel that we have a good people to work with," the publisher went on. "We don't have to spoil things by curtailing the freedoms. I want to be sure that fellows like me are not called fascists or reactionaries in Czechoslovakia just because we don't want to go as far as the extreme left." He paused to emphasize the next points. "We have a finely balanced coalition now—but if Ada and his friends lose their heads and start consigning to the reactionary hell everyone who disagrees with them, they will upset the apple cart." He smiled and looked at me. "But it is even more dangerous if America, who gets frightened every time she hears the word nationalization, brands us all reds and washes her hands of us. We're not all red and we're not all black. Why can't we try to work out an amalgamation of the political democracy of the West and economic democracy of the East?"

We were passing between rows of white houses. Two women lingered near a doorway exchanging village gossip. They wore their Sunday cotton dresses. From the open windows came a faint smell of beets and cabbage. A flock of geese fled before a lanky youth. The village band was setting up its instruments to play.

A large crowd had gathered before the National Committee Building, the former town hall. Huge billboards covered with

election posters stood on the small square and campaigners leaned against barn stools and tree trunks. The empty windows of the butcher, the locksmith, and the baker were bright in the sun. A loudspeaker, attached to the roof of the committee building, announced that there would be an important election address by the head of the National Committee on behalf of the Communist party.

The announcer's words seemed to float out over the villagers' heads. The men stood around in dark suits, wiping their ruddy necks with large handkerchiefs and smoking their pipes. The loudspeakers, the flags, the orations seemed out of place. They were all assembled on the small village square to listen to political speeches, but they were Bohemian peasants, traders, artisans, workers resting on a Sunday, thinking about their geese and potato patches, or perhaps an ailing calf or a door that had to be painted the next day. The sun and the barn smells and the smoke rising from the chimneys were much more real than the wiry speaker in his city clothes.

It had probably also been warm on that Sunday afternoon in June, 1942, when Stepan Hurzik conducted his local band and Stefan Horak, the butcher, Vladimír Ruzicka, the baker, and Jaroslav Podhora, the locksmith, drove their carts numbered two, four, and seventeen into the main square of Lidice.

Empty stores had also lined the streets then. There had been church services that morning. Vaclav Jelinek was twenty-six years old and resting from the pits. Bohuslav Straha, twenty-two, came to see his bride, Frantisek Puchmeller chewed his pipe, glad to get some sun and air. Most of the men had worked in the Zapotocki mine.

A few days before coming to Dobryš I had fingered their dust-stained clothes. They lay in neat little stacks in a cold monastery outside Kladno. The names, addresses, and occupations of the men were written on little cards. Beyond stretched

a barren field in the center of which stood a thin cross marking the site of the village of Lidice.

Once there had been women there who cooked cabbage and children who chased geese. It had been a full life like the one here in Dobryš and the dreams had been simple and good—a better house, a new barn, a Sunday suit, perhaps a trip to Prague before old age set in

At the village of Kladno I spoke to Maria Mastalírovce, whose husband and two sons had been Lidice men. She sat quietly, telling me of Ravensbrück and mixed transport trains and the grocery store they had once had. Now, together with the other Lidice women, she was an honorary citizen of Kladno and was supported by the state. The outcome of the elections did not bother her. "I have the sickness of bones and nerves," she said. "The only thing left to hope for is a grocery store in the rebuilt Lidice. But they say they will have a large co-operative now. Who knows?"

Ludmila Huríková, who had lost her husband and son, had returned from Auschwitz with forty-five other Lidice women. She sat wearing a wide black skirt and black kerchief and said, "If we had known about the tragedy we wouldn't have tried to survive."

They had not known about Lidice, she said, that it had been destroyed or that it had become a world symbol, until their return to Czechoslovakia after liberation. It was not until then that they found the field and the clothes of their men. They were taken to Prague where they met the President. They were photographed and filmed. They received gifts and packages. "But Kladno isn't our home," she sighed, "neither is Prague. What's the use of the Second Republic unless Lidice is rebuilt?"

Maria Dolecova was a blue-eyed girl of twelve, one of the seventy Lidice children who had been found. After camps and slave labor in Germany she had made her way back to Lidice where she learned that her mother had come back with con-

sumption and her brothers and father had been Lidice men.

"I live with my aunt," she said, "and I go to school. I had to learn Czech all over again and forget German. We are studying Russian in school, too." I asked her what she wanted to do when she graduated. She said at once, "Go to the new Lidice. That's our home."

"Ano, ano, that's the only hope—to have Lidice again," the others repeated in a chorus.

When I returned to Czechoslovakia six months later, in November, the banners and flags were down. The hills were barren. The excitement of the spring festivities was gone. The speeches, campaigns and parades of May had resulted in a victory for the Communist party which had won 40 per cent of the votes. The new Communist premier promised to maintain the coalition and many who had feared immediate drastic changes felt reassured, others still wondered.

Five days after the elections, the people of Prague watched the public execution of Nazi Governor Frank, thus closing the chapter of war, occupation and revenge.

The word *excitement* was replaced by the words *hard work, production, export*. The harvest had been good but the average family still lived on potatoes, beets and bread. The ministries buzzed with activity. The planners and economists worked from seven in the morning until midnight and the words "Two-Year Plan" spelled the future. The government was determined to succeed. By the end of 1948 they hoped to raise production by 30 per cent and in some cases to triple or quadruple the 1938 level.

Late in the month I drove down to Slovakia. On the way, we stopped at Zlin, home of the world-renowned Bata works. I had been there before and had watched leather, rubber, and shoe merchants from every part of the world attending the shoe fair in the large, green company hotel overlooking the vast plant.

It was the property of the state now, run by a director-in-chief and three section chiefs who, in turn, each had four branch chiefs under them

In his pine-paneled executive office, one of the four directors, Liboslav Masner, who had been with Bata for fifteen years, explained in fluent English.

"The Two-Year Plan calls for 70 per cent of prewar production in shoes. We're now working at 60 per cent. That's because we're going to put out a better shoe."

"Is the plant operated on the spot or from Prague?" I asked.

He stretched his massive hands on the desk. "All business and technical details connected with production are taken care of right here. But all policy matters, buying and selling, are taken care of by the Leather and Rubber Department of the Ministry of Industry in Prague."

I asked him whether he personally felt the benefits of nationalization.

He laughed. "Certainly. I come into the plant every morning at six, and let's see—" He fingered through his time book. "On Monday I left at eight-thirty, on Tuesday at seven, on Wednesday at eleven-thirty, and today I'll be here in a meeting until one in the morning. My salary is the same as it used to be." His voice became determined now. "But we must do it. We cannot allow any one person to control Bata again. You know that Jan Bata became a collaborator. If we fail and other nationalized enterprises fail, the whole program, and therefore the entire nation's future, will be in jeopardy. We've learned our lesson in Czechoslovakia."

Downstairs in the factory, the machines were silent as we walked through the sole-cutting plant. It was the nine o'clock break. The workers lined up for a plate of soup for which they paid one crown fifty. They looked like workers in any industrial town anywhere in the world. There were women in bright

aprons and smocks, some of them as young as twelve and fourteen.

A middle-aged woman, who had been with Bata for thirty-two years, was anxious to tell me about herself. "I like Bata, always have I've been here through two wars and it's a good place to work" She looked up at the portrait of Thomas Bata, the founder "He was a good boss and we have a good boss now. It's good in Czechoslovakia. If the Two-Year Plan works, we'll be all right."

I spoke to a dozen men and women. Although they had not yet felt the benefits of nationalization in a material sense, they had all found a vague new kind of security. As one young man put it, "You know, it doesn't mean much, really, for me to be part owner in a big plant like this, but actually I am, and we all are, and after you think about it for a while—I don't know why—it makes you feel good."

The editor of the factory paper talked at great length about the importance of Czechoslovakia's experiment and then added, "But what does America have against us? We asked you for a loan to help us put across something which will raise the standard of living of our people, something which might be able to give all of Europe proof that there is such a thing as Socialism in a democracy. You turned us down" He was sad. He was not the only one who spoke with this sadness. It was as if he had been let down by an old friend.

At Bratislava I stood on the Danube looking southward toward the Balkans. There was something strange about this capital of Slovakia, something I couldn't define at first. Here were busy streets, stores laden with food and all kinds of consumer goods. People thronged the restaurants and movie houses, wearing well-cut coats and high felt boots. Night clubs and inns were crowded. There was singing and the drinking of the famous Slovakian wine. Women displayed their elegant clothes

in cafés. Dozens of demobilized Hungarian counts loafed about the hotel lobbies and restaurants, usually flashing a pearl or diamond pin. Here, for the first time since I had returned to the Continent, I found old Europe unchanged, as if there had never been a war.

Indeed, for Bratislava there had not been a war. Slovakia had not been a neutral like Sweden, or a satellite like Finland, but a puppet state. Though only a few miles outside the city one could see the physical destruction caused by heavy fighting, Bratislava itself had suffered little. Unlike Prague, it had not been occupied for six years. Its houses had not been requisitioned, its shops had remained open in the hands of the same owners, its schools, concert halls and theaters had been untouched, its town hall had not housed the Gestapo or a military governor.

The people of Bratislava showed no effects of occupation. Their outlook was different from that of the people of Prague. Their concern for the future seemed to be put on like a window decoration. Every Slovak I met pointed with pride to the few bomb-scarred buildings and spoke at length about the devastated regions of eastern Slovakia, as if to compensate for the five peaceful years as Germany's puppet.

To all intents and purposes, this was still Czechoslovakia, part of the Second Republic. Yet, although I had crossed no borders, and the difference of language was very slight, I felt as if I had come into another country. The rich black soil was that of southeastern Europe, and in many ways the people—even the shape of the buildings—gave me the sensation of having crossed the Danube into the Balkans.

By race, temperament and appearance, the Slovaks were tied more closely to Eastern Europe than were the Czechs. The peasants who made up the bulk of the population were illiterate and poor, like the peasants of Poland and the Ukraine. They were reared in a parochial atmosphere and paid allegiance to a fanatic

clergy. Obviously it had been not too difficult for Father Tiso and his group to establish a pro-Nazi dictatorship.

I could now understand the many Czech officials in Prague who had sighed, "The problems of Czechoslovakia can be seen in Slovakia."

How was this country of easy-going, wine-drinking, pulpit-fearing, nationalistic farmers, going to fit into the Second Republic?

I visited the head of the majority Slovak Democratic party. He was a short, rotund man, with wide blue eyes and blond hair.

"The problems in Slovakia are not simple," he said. "We like our brothers, the Czechs, especially if they give us money to build a new schoolhouse. But we don't like it when after the school is finished they send in a Czech janitor." He laughed. "The mothers and fathers of the children protest and march down to the school. We put in a Slovak janitor and it's all right now." He shook his head. "The whole school system here is no good because there's too much of this"—he crossed himself—"so now we are changing it. We are taking the American system for our example. I was not in America myself, but every Slovak has a relative there. Besides, the experts in Prague say your school system is good."

"What about nationalization?" I asked.

"Sure, we support it. We have too many farms and not enough factories. We're going to build up a Bata works, and—and—" His secretary interjected, "Paper mills." "Yes, paper mills."

He pointed his finger at me as he paced the floor. "We want the state to run them, yes. But remember, as long as the Slovak Democratic party is in power it will be clean. I say so."

He was warning up to it now. He was a Slovak political boss driving his points home to an audience.

"No party influences will make jobs in our national industries. That may be all right in the Czech lands where a man becomes

manager of a plant if he was a leader of the partisans. Here he must know his business. They like to call us the stronghold of reaction. Sure, we have many reactionaries in Slovakia. You cannot change a whole system overnight. We were poor and uneducated and exploited by the Austrians and Hungarians. But we believe in democracy. We go up to Prague and we bang on the table and we make our demands, and if they don't listen we walk out. They say we are reactionaries because we don't like Russia. That's a lie. The Slovaks are the biggest lovers of Russia in the world. We like them more than the Czechs do. We don't like their system and we let them know it. It is well known that practically every Slovak has a relative in the United States. He also has a relative in the Soviet Union. But also today every Slovak has his watch in Moscow, and he doesn't like it."

He paused and then sat down, pleased with his speech. After a moment he continued, "The biggest problem we have is Hungarians. We have too many." He turned to his secretary. "How many? I never remember figures. Anyhow, we're sending them out now. They won't make trouble again." He was becoming passionate once more, making another speech to the voters, and this time touching on a subject that excited them all. "The reactionaries, the feudalists, the fascists, the fanatic Catholics, the Hitlerites—that's what the Magyars are. They must go."

On my way to his office I had seen a sign outside the Ministry of the Interior saying IF YOU COME TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF A HUNGARIAN—DO NOT ENTER.

Later, in the office of the official in charge of the Hungarian transfer, I looked at an elaborate map. On it were marked countless little farms in red and blue. The Slovaks were trying to be reasonable about the expulsion of the Hungarians. They were making allowances for Hungarians who had not been disloyal and who wanted to remain. It was necessary, of course, to prove that they had not been disloyal. This was seldom easy.

"We are also making sure that they have farms to go to," said

the official, pointing to the map. "They will exchange farms with Slovaks in Hungary who will come home Those are the blue marks here." He placed his finger on a cluster of dots in Hungary. "We're trying to be reasonable."

I was willing to admit that reason was on his side. And yet what was the result? Only that, as usual, thousands of people were shifting in Central Europe I couldn't help thinking that many an inhabitant of a village on the Danube might be wondering "Today I am a Hungarian, yesterday I was an Austrian, but I am supposed to be a Slovak, what next?" Like the man with the glass eye on the plane to Prague, he would be trapped in Europe's same old passport geography.

Back in Prague, the Vltava's icy surface looked stern. The towers around it cut clear lines in the sky. It was a chilly afternoon. A few people rushed into the massive building of the Czernin Palace, now housing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They looked busy and important with their bulging brief cases tucked under their arms All government buildings were lighted up There was no doubt that the Czechs were working hard. In a world of shifting populations, violent hatreds, extreme nationalism, and, worst of all, hopelessness and indirection, they had decided on a direction and were determined to follow it

I turned into Zlata Ulicka, the Street of the Alchemists It was not even a street, but a row of tiny houses cut into the wall of a medieval fortress Here the Kings of Bohemia had locked up their alchemists and commanded them to produce gold I wondered whether many realized how close to alchemy the success of the Czech experiment would be The future—the ultimate compatibility of the Eastern and Western concepts of democracy—was being tested here.

The Broken Lances

P O L A N D

“YOU'RE AN AMERICAN, aren't you?”
the Czech conductor asked in German.

“Yes ”

“I could tell immediately.”

We were nearing the Polish border. In a few moments, the conductor told me, we would be at Petrovice, the last village on the Czech side of the border. He was a pleasant little man with a friendliness typical of his countrymen. He seemed to be pleased with everything. I could see vacant spaces in his gums as he grinned. “All Americans that go through here are nice,” he said. He leaned over me. “But I don't like the British so well. They are stuck up and they don't like what's going on in Czechoslovakia now.”

“What about you?” I asked. “Do you like it?”

“That's a good question. Do I like it? Two years Buchenwald, a year Auschwitz, and now you ask me do I like it in Czechoslovakia.” He pointed to the empty spaces in his gums. “The Germans. You know, I was a Communist before the war. I am a Communist today. We have a good country for everybody who is good Czech. Yes, lady, our country is going the right way.” Then he shook his head sadly. “But it is different over there. In a few minutes we'll be in Poland. Oh, no, it's not the same

It was never much good. You just wait, you'll see the difference. It is something to see in Poland."

We stopped with a jerk. A few minutes later Czech border inspectors entered. They glanced at my bags but left without bothering to open them. Polish inspectors entered five minutes later, first a soldier who painstakingly copied the entire contents of my passport, then a civilian to question me about money, and finally another civilian to examine my luggage.

Strained whispering spread through the train. Out of the window I could see Polish troops standing about the station. I was not surprised. The Czecho-Polish border was notorious for the smuggling going back and forth across it. A few hours earlier, after the train left Prague, I had met a young man who blithely informed me that he had spent most of the war smuggling and was still at it. "There is big business around here," he had said. "I don't know why I shouldn't get some of it. I lived like an animal for six years, and now I don't owe a thing to anyone, and I don't care about anyone but myself." This was an attitude I had observed, with variations, in many young people in other liberated countries.

As we finally rolled out of Zebrzydowice, a tall, heavily mustached conductor entered my compartment. Looking up at him I had a sudden sense of recognition: this was Poland. All the snubbed, fleshy noses, all the watery blue eyes, the friendly smiles of Polish peasantry, seemed to have merged in him. He was to sell me my ticket from Zebrzydowice to Warsaw, and as he stood there in his shabby soiled uniform, scowling over his book, struggling desperately to figure the fare he must have computed dozens of times before, I couldn't help wondering how recently he had left the soil. At last, with a sigh of relief, he handed me the ticket and politely asked for 640 zlotys. When I had paid him he hesitated for a moment as if to say something but changed his mind and left instead. In a few minutes he was back again, this time accompanied by an older man

whose long coat obviously had belonged to someone heavier and taller. The latter stepped close to me and peering over the rims of his spectacles explained apologetically, "Miss, my friend here made a mistake. He charged you, let's see, 104 zlotys too little."

The first conductor broke in sheepishly, "Yes, lady, 104 zlotys, and I figured and figured and figured, didn't I?" He took off his cap and scratched his head. "This stupid Polish head of mine just doesn't know how to count. Didn't I add it up about four times, lady? Just forgot to add the figure for the seat, that's what it was, for the seat."

"That's all right," I said, "I understand." I counted out the difference.

The older conductor clicked his tongue. "Then it's all settled, I can go now." He disappeared through the door. I offered the mathematician a cigarette which he took carefully. "I must figure out how to correct the mistake now," he sighed. "It's quite hard. I have to do it in the book and on the ticket."

At this point a third man in a different uniform appeared in the doorway. My friend automatically snapped to attention and touched his visor with two fingers, the traditional Polish salute. "My respects, and how does the little health do tonight, Mr. Inspector?"

"Not so good tonight. I am off at Zebizydowice today in the morning and am sitting there the whole day waiting for the train. They are never here when you need them, but just when you are not ready they come, and will they wait for you then?"

The conductor listened sympathetically to the complaints of his superior and nodded in agreement. "I guess just everything goes wrong. Mr. Inspector, please, I just made a mistake on the American lady's ticket and she paid me the difference. What to do now?"

The inspector reached for the book. "What means what to do? It's simple." He drew a long sheet of paper out of his pocket and they both studied it with growing puzzlement. I could

see that they were no nearer a solution and I ventured to suggest in Polish, which was coming back more and more quickly to me, that they simply cross out the old sum and add up a new one. Both men looked up with great relief written on their faces. "Of course, that's it."

But immediately the conductor's face fell once again. "I can't, it is impossible. It has a carbon and the whole thing will get smeared, blasted be the Virgin, these carbons don't work at all."

The inspector was nearing the end of his patience. "May the white cholera take it, let them worry. It's not your fault that they don't give you better carbon."

I opened my brief case and extracted a new sheet of carbon.

"For me? Oh, thank you, lady, bless you. What carbon! We haven't seen such carbon, have we, Mr. Inspector?"

The crisis of the error was over. The conductor walked out busily scribbling in his book while the inspector sat down opposite me and stared into space.

"Oh, it goes bad here. Heavy times. One cannot live in this land any more."

"Why is that?"

"You are asking why? No money. Poor people cannot live at all. Before the war I made 200 zlotys a month and I could eat, my family could eat. Now I make 3000 and we all starve."

"Isn't the government doing anything about it?"

"The government, yes, they're doing much, getting good salaries for themselves, that's what they're doing," he continued bitterly. "Do we have a government here at all?"

"You're a government employee, aren't you?"

"Yes, I guess I am. But all I know is that we have to pay for everything ourselves. See this uniform? I had to buy it all myself. The cap, the shoes, everything. The things they gave us were dirty, old, and torn, and what kind of a uniform would that be for an inspector?" He stared blankly out the window. "What is there to talk much? That conductor makes 1000 zlotys

a month. He has three children and a wife, and a pound of butter costs 500 zlotys Can he live?"

"How do you live, then?"

He was silent and for a while I thought there would be no answer. Perhaps there was no answer But suddenly he leaned forward in the seat and began to talk rapidly in a harsh trembling whisper "I'll tell you how we live Did you see that lady in here, the fat one, a little while ago? Well, she had third class. Now she has second class We fixed her up and the money is here" He slapped his pocket "In Katowice they'll come pouring in. Most of them won't have seats, others will want to change their seats Well, we'll do it. There is no other way And you know we don't care. The government cheats us so we cheat the government You have to cheat and steal to live in Poland. . . ."

We rolled into Katowice, the first large Polish city beyond the border The inspector had sprung up, and now he and all the conductors were hanging out the doors shouting and gesticulating to the crowd that thronged the platform Almost immediately two young officers appeared in the car and in loud imperious voices demanded a first-class compartment for the Yugoslav ambassador and his aide. The compartment next to mine was thrown open and a sallow-complexioned, drawn little man struggled in His shoes were covered with dust, his clothes were soiled and wrinkled. A duty bandage hung partly undone from his arm His round black-rimmed European glasses were held together by adhesive tape So that was the ambassador. But the first-class compartment which had been placed at his disposal was hardly more elegant. And along with all the hundreds of lower-class passengers he would still have the use of only a single common toilet which had no running water

I began to watch the people streaming onto the train I had known the Prague-Warsaw route well before the war It had been one of the finest and most luxurious lines in Eastern Europe. And in those days the passengers had matched the train Diplo-

mats, well-dressed businessmen with their wives, children and governesses returning to Poland from their yearly cure at Marienbad or Karlsbad, from skiing on the Semmering or shopping in Vienna. This was a different crowd today. The people I saw pushing and screaming at the station had in most cases never been on a train before the war. Heavy-limbed peasants with chickens, ducks, and other edible goods under their arms and on their backs, tired Polish women, ill-fed, ill-clad, weighted by baskets, sacks, bundles wrapped in newspapers, and the inevitable *tobolek*—a bundle wrapped in a sheet or blanket. They pushed and cursed and shouted with no regard for anyone or anything but the immediate aim of getting on the train. These were the people on whom my conductors hoped to make their fortunes tonight.

I walked through the train. There was a middle-aged woman without shoes carrying a baby in her arms and trailing two barefooted youngsters behind her. She pushed and elbowed her way to a seat on one of the benches. Others sat or lay on the floors. All one could see were feet, legs, and boots. Army boots on women, cavalry boots on young boys, women's shoes on children, heavy patched stockings instead of shoes, and bare dirty calloused feet. They were all going to Warsaw, to their capital, their *stolica*. I thought of Aldanov's story, "Tashkent, the City of Bread," in which the Russian people, hearing that there was bread in Tashkent, swarmed onto the trains of the Soviet Union and rode like cattle from city to city to discover in the end that even at their dream city of Tashkent there was no bread. And I couldn't help thinking of other trains that had passed over this route a year or two earlier carrying Czechs, Hungarians, Austrians, to other dream cities—the "estates" of Auschwitz, Tremblinka, and Maidanek.

During the middle of the night a woman came to share my compartment. Presently I sensed that she was examining me carefully. At last she spoke

"Do you understand German?"

"Yes."

"I hope that when you leave here you tell your people how bad things are in Poland"

Here it was again I had been in Poland hardly nine hours and had not yet heard a cheerful word.

"I come from Lwow. But Lwow isn't Poland any more We had to leave, you know. And now I live in the newly colonized western districts"

I was more interested now. "How is it there? How is the colonization going on, have the Germans moved out yet?"

"No, the Poles are moving in, but the Germans aren't out yet. In some places we live in the same houses with the Germans, especially on the farms, but that's not the trouble The trouble is that we're not free."

"What do you mean you are not free? You seem to be talking freely enough"

"Yes, but try to get a job if you're not a member of the PPR, the workers' party. Anyone who is not a member is a reactionary. My husband is in the army and he hates it. The Russaks control everything" She shot a glance full of hate toward a Russian soldier who stood in the corridor just outside our compartment Yet, although she spoke loudly enough, she didn't seem afraid that he would hear her "Why doesn't an international commission come here? I beg you, lady, tell them when you get home"

"I'll report what I see"

"You'll see plenty if you only look in the right places"

We were slowing down I looked out the window Weak morning sunlight began to fall on the barren field In the distance some people were standing around on something that looked like an unfinished trench The train stopped with a jerk, there was a shuffling in the corridor This was Warsaw

As I descended from the car, I looked around for a familiar

sight or a familiar face. But all I could see was a mosaic of blank faces, peasant kerchiefs, tattered military caps, and strange-looking men's hats on high coiffures of women. I was besieged on all sides. "Anything to sell, anything to sell . . ." "Want to buy a camera, a watch . . ." The lady who had shared my compartment stood on the steps beside me and waved them away briskly. "Go away, you silly Poles. Can't you see the lady is a foreigner? What kind of an impression are you creating?" The irony was pathetic. She had spent a good part of the night attempting to paint a black picture of her country, and now, stricken suddenly with shame, she felt called upon to apologize for her people.

I had heard about the devastation of Warsaw and I was prepared. I had seen pictures and I had been in other ruined cities of Europe. Nevertheless, somewhere inside of me I had expected that there would be at least some faint flicker of recognition, that the feel of the city I had known would be there. But what stretched before me on that first morning in Warsaw was a desolation such as no human imagination could comprehend at once.

The Embassy had neglected to reserve a hotel room for me, and for five hours I hunted for one among the ruins and rubble of the city. As I walked or rode through the abnormally wide streets the desolation merely grew and before long the mounting fear that I might not be able to find a room at all worked on me so that I felt like a rat scavenging among ruins. Yet there were people here, thousands of them, riding on streetcars, in UNRRA jeeps, and in crude rickshaws pulled by broken-down bicycles and bare-footed peasants. At the Polonia Hotel, now center of the foreign world, swarms of people pressed against the desk clamoring for rooms that weren't there. I hovered hopelessly at the fringe. All around me there was whispering which I soon learned was the black-market exchange, operating unrestricted

and unafraid, offering 800 zlotys to a dollar, 2500 zlotys to a pound I had no dollars and there was no business with me

Rebuffed at the Polonia, I set out to find an American friend who was staying at what was called a hotel, but actually was no more than a single floor perched on top of a ruin.

"What on earth are you doing here?" were her first words of greeting

"I'm so tired I forget What are you doing here?" We laughed.

"As long as you're here, we might as well have some breakfast"

"May I wash first? I haven't touched water since I left Prague twenty-four hours ago"

"Wash? You're in Warsaw, dear. There is a toilet down the hall—but I warn you there is no water and no plumbing and you better not sit down"

We managed to get a bucket of water, however, and I was able to scrape some of the dirt off my face and hands A change of stockings and underwear did the rest

"Have you seen the Warsaw women yet?" she asked over tea and rolls

"Yes, some They looked pretty elegant at the Polonia, but those were mostly foreigners, I guess"

"You'd be surprised Money will get you anything you want in this city, antelope shoes, pure silk underwear, the finest delicacies But only one out of ten thousand Poles has money, and not even American dollars are enough for the prices you have to pay."

"I've got to find a room" I stood up.

"UNRRA—the only hope"

We crossed the city through unfamiliar streets with familiar names The morning sun caressed the ugly ruins, softening their sharp contours The city was bustling with activity, merchants hawked their wares on every corner. Sides of beef hung from

market counters, pork, eggs, butter, smoked eels, rare wines and sausages lined the shelves, while bare-footed children begged on the streets by the dozen. These luxuries were not for the people. The income of the average Pole was between one and two thousand zlotys a month—yet a loaf of bread cost 30 zlotys, a pound of butter 500, a slice of meat as high as 8000.

The UNRRA people were sympathetic and kind, but the fact was that there was not a single vacant bed in Warsaw. Nevertheless, the public relations officer picked up a driver and jeep and took me on a four-hour jaunt from one end of the city to the other, argued and cajoled with desk clerks and petty officials of the housing bureau, but all to no avail. When I had finally lost the last glimmer of hope, he turned to me and declared cheerfully. "Come on to the Bristol, I was saving this until the last. There is an American correspondent who just left for the western territories and I don't think anyone is using his bed tonight."

The manager of the Bristol shrugged "I am sorry, I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know the name of any of the correspondents here. They come and go and go and come"

"I think his room was 33," Mac said. "May we have the key, please?"

The key was handed over without hesitation. We climbed to the third floor through a mass of debris. The room was large and bright. One wall was almost entirely missing, but after five hours in Warsaw one scarcely noticed it. We weren't even sure whether it was the right room, but a copy of what looked like a correspondent's dispatch lay on the table and we took the chance

That evening I was sitting in the dimly lighted buffet of the Bristol. My companions were two Poles, one a young government employee in his early twenties, and the other an UNRRA

driver. The latter, a dark-skinned, bushy-haired man with high cheekbones and piercing black eyes, spoke Polish with the sing-song accent of a Russian or Ukrainian, I was not sure which. The government man spoke English, his accent was clipped Oxford, apparently acquired in England before the war. I asked the driver whether he was Polish and he nodded "Of course I am Polish. I am from Wilno, the part that isn't Poland any more." His uniform was that of the Kosciuszko Division which had fought with Russia. "I was in Russia until six months ago, in all the battles, at Stalingrad, at the crossing of the Dnieper. I have wounds." He pointed to his arm and chest.

"Really?" the young government employee exclaimed. "I was there all through the war, too. I was in the infantry at first and then I taught at the cadet school in Gorki."

For a while they sipped their beer and exchanged experiences. I could see, however, that there was a certain restraint in their conversation, they were not at ease with each other. I had hoped to be able to ask them specific questions about conditions in the country. I wanted to know about the two hundred students arrested at Krakow on May third for their protest demonstration against the government, about the murder of three Jews on the road from Krakow to Katowice the night before, right under the nose of an UNRRA jeep. These questions and many others. But there was a tenseness about them that cautioned me, and instead I posed some general queries.

"Lady, you can see for yourself that it's just no good. No food, no nothing." The usual refrain. "We are not really alive," the driver continued morosely.

The young man across the table picked up the complaint. "He's right. There is no food and the things you see here are not for the people." He pointed to the heavily laden counter.

"Well, then, why doesn't the government shut down these markets, curb their prices, and distribute the food fairly?"

The government man shrugged. "We have a specific food

program. The government requisitions the food for all who work in essential industries. They get their rations. The rest is given to the stores. You mustn't forget that Poland is not a disciplined country. If we did not leave these goods in the open market at these prices, they would sell at three times the price on the black market."

"Is it only the food that is bad?" I pressed further.

They smiled but neither replied. I knew what side the government official was on but I couldn't decide about the soldier. He had fought with the Red Army and yet in his eyes one could see the bitterness that I had detected in so many of his countrymen when they referred to the government or to the Russians.

"Come on, you two. I am a friend of Poland and I want to get a clear picture of what's going on here."

The soldier smiled weakly. "You know yourself, you're not a foolish woman."

The other spoke to me now in English, which the driver did not understand. "I would talk freely to you, but our friend here doesn't want to talk in front of me. Why should I talk in front of him? I know exactly what's on his mind. He wants to tell you about the Russians."

The soldier kept his eyes fixed intently on us, trying to decipher our conversation. "Today in Poland," he said deliberately, "nobody knows who he is talking to."

The young man continued in English. "I told you. And he's right too."

I was exasperated. Here were two people who had fought the same war on the same side in the same army and were now back in the country which they had jointly liberated and yet there they were openly admitting that they distrusted each other. The young man rose to get some cigarettes at the buffet.

The soldier leaned toward me. "You know that I wanted to say we're not free here. Take my home town, for example. I

am a Pole and my family is Polish but if we wished to stay there we would have to declare ourselves Soviet citizens. Those people that took it over are Asiatic and we're European."

I gazed at his Mongolian cheekbones and remarked the Eastern accent in his speech. But there was fierce pride in his dark eyes as he repeated, "We're West and they're East."

The other had returned and was standing behind me listening and shaking his head. "I told you that was on his mind. And if I were to tell you now that the present Polish government is the first progressive government this country has ever had, and that all it's trying to do is to educate a backward people, who all talk like that—most of them don't even read or write, but they listen to fascist propaganda—if I were to tell you all this in front of him in Polish I would not be sure of my life. Do you realize that we have lost 20,000 people since the liberation—simply ambushed in the woods, by people who talk the way he does?"

"But it's obvious that this fellow is no fascist or reactionary," I exclaimed. "He fought on your side in Russia. He's not one of the Anders men who you say are at the bottom of the murder and disunity in the country."

But there was no sense talking further. I feared that I had already gone too far. I was sorry to have made the soldier speak. I believed them both when they said, "Nobody knows who he is talking to in Poland today." That was indeed the picture. The young Communist was honestly afraid of the armed bands that roamed the woods, and the driver had just as much cause, if not more, to fear the security police.

I was wakened by a rap on the door. I stared up into pitch darkness and then the jagged edges of the broken wall over my bed explained to me that I was still in Warsaw. The knocking came again. I slipped on a robe and inquired cautiously, "Who's there?"

An American voice answered, "It's not the Gestapo. It's me, John Strohm."

I remembered the correspondent's dispatch on the table. That was the name on it. I opened the door and a tall young man dressed in a correspondent's uniform gazed at me in embarrassment.

"I am sorry, but we had to turn back sooner than we expected." He turned around to hand a few cigarettes to an open-mouthed peasant who crossed himself three times and disappeared. I looked about for the light switch while Strohm dropped his kit and three cameras on the couch and emptied his pockets of K-rations, cigarettes, and notes.

"Don't worry about me. You get used to this sort of thing in Warsaw. Every time you go away for more than an hour you find someone in your room. This is the first time it has been a young lady, though." He winked good-humoredly. "What's your name?"

"Edith Sulkin." I explained how I had got there. "I saw your agricultural piece lying on the table. It was the only clue I had as to whether I was in the right room." I felt more at ease now. He was a pleasant, open-faced American newspaperman with none of the suave pretensions or polish of the war correspondent post-1940. He was from Chicago, traveling under UNRRA auspices and reporting on Europe's agricultural problems to a hundred different farm journals in the United States.

"But not the cut-and-dried stuff Mr. Hoover and his boys have been handing out," he explained carefully. "I write for our farmers and their families about the folks who till the soil over here. I have been to Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and I'm going to Germany from here. Wherever I go, I get myself an UNRRA car and drive out to the country and stay there about ten days. I talk to the peasants or farmers, eat with them, watch them work, and try to figure out what they're thinking. So far I've learned one thing: people who till the soil

are all alike—and don't forget two out of three till it. They're the real stuff, they're the ones the folks back home can understand. Farmers are the same the world over, whether they own one acre or four hundred I knew what a Yugoslav was talking about when he showed me his land and his plow even if I did not understand a word of his language And I know that Hiram back home will understand when I write about the potato crop, the sour milk, and the black bread that Giovanni or Stasik eats, when I write what he uses for fodder, what chores his children do, and how he thinks" Strohm went on, "What's more, two out of three people in the world go hungry and nobody is really tackling the problem"

"How have you found it here in Poland?"

"Well—" His middle-western drawl lapsed into momentary silence "It's not so simple here. They've put through an agrarian reform, they have parceled out the land, and now they're colonizing the new western territories Everything seems to be done in good faith, but the organization is bad Out west, for instance, near Breslau, I have visited some of the colonizers who were living with Germans The Germans hadn't moved out yet and so they kept house together and seemed to get along fine. But no matter where you go in this land no one is happy"

"That's just what I have noticed Out of every ten people you talk to, eight tell you that the country isn't free Yet one doesn't see the signs of oppression On the other hand, you see them quietly suppressing Mikolajczyk and his party. For example, you can't get his newspaper because, although it had one of the largest circulations in the country, it was allotted so little paper that it was forced onto the black market."

"The thing at the bottom of the distrust and the dissatisfaction is food," Strohm interrupted

"I know, it's impossible to keep hungry people satisfied. But seeing the confusion and bitterness everywhere, I often wonder whether it isn't the people themselves who are at fault I knew

them well before the war and they were always pathological about their country I was thinking about them tonight after I went to bed They always had dreams of Polish empire and have constantly lived in the glory of the Golden Age of Stanislaw August. Their tragedy began generations ago in the wars with the Tartars and the Swedes, when their cavalry and the tales of its heroism inspired the youth with a sense of glory. They are a Slavic and a romantic nation. Today's world is not real to them. They're still a nation of knights When Pilsudski formed his legion and liberated Poland, his glory fed the national pride. And they have never forgotten their victory over the Red Army in 1922 For twenty-five years they celebrated it. While the generals and colonels hunted bear with Goering and licked their chops for a piece of Czechoslovakia, while the students fought against admitting Jews to the universities, while Socialists were dying in one of Europe's first concentration camps at Bereza Kartuska, and while the Polish peasants who made up 70 per cent of the population, starved, illiterate, naked, and ignorant, listened to sermons from the pulpit preaching hatred of the East—the glory of the Polish cavalry was extolled again and again in public parades and demonstrations on Pilsudski Square They all dreamed of silver lances. Then came war and six years of chaos, slavery, and murder ”

I lit a cigarette and looked at the sky. The thoughts of the past twenty-four hours kept pressing, it was dawning, but I couldn't stop talking.

“Now they're liberated But hungry and destroyed as they are, they still have their obsession The mere fact that the present government has been set up and is supported by Russia is reason enough for the average Pole to fear and dislike it This, of course, is what gives the government the argument ‘No matter what you do for the sick, decadent mind, it will remain bitter and resentful, therefore it must be chastized and re-educated.’ Perhaps they're right, but we who have been reared on

the principle of the Bill of Rights feel that a sick man may deserve more concessions and considerations than a healthy one. If they want Mikolajczyk, why not give them Mikolajczyk? Things could not be worse than they are now, anyhow. The country is like a boil coming to a head. Armed bands roam the countryside and the security police are everywhere. I am sure that the government realizes its predicament. Most of the people in it are hard-working young men, but they're fanatics and I am afraid that they're misjudging the national character. The Poles will not stand any kind of force for long. They are romantics, as I said, and one bright morning they'll rise against the government no matter how futile it may seem. They did the same thing under Bor during the war."

We both looked out the window at the ruins of the city. That uprising of September, 1944, had also been the romantic but hopeless revolt of a nation of knights. It was full daylight now and the people of Warsaw were slowly emerging from their underground homes and cellars.

It was a chilly afternoon. I hailed one of the few *drozhkas* remaining in the city and asked to be taken to the section that had been the Warsaw Ghetto. The horse was as skinny as its driver, who was a blackened peasant with wrinkled face and dripping nose. "I'll show you everything, oh, wonderfully well. I'll take you all over for five hundred zlotys." He sniffed and rubbed his nose with his forefinger. "Go ahead, you skinny animal. We're going to show the lady."

We passed from Marszalkowska Street to Trebacka, Theater Square, Senatorska, and Bielanska. The sight of ruins, now familiar, no longer impressed me. The stone lying about aimlessly was dead and cold. Suddenly the ruin ended. What lay ahead was utterly flat. A sweet smell arose. Not a person was in sight and there was an indescribable stillness. Stretched before me was a city of the dead.

"Thousands of them were burned alive in the houses," the driver said. He noticed me sniffing and he went on talking as if to his horse in a dull monotone "Yes, that's where a lot of the little Jews died. They're here under the rubble, that's what the smell is. Ever since the Germans left I have been taking people here. Jews come and cry in my *diozhka*." The air was thick with the sickly sweet smell and fine white ashes flew about in the dusk.

We came to Nalewki Street. It was not really a street now, but I remembered it as it had been. One of the busiest, most populated streets in Warsaw, with store on top of store, factory next to workshop, with pious Jews in their black robes and curly sideburns running about their business. Where draymen carried stupendous loads on their powerful backs, where children played in the gutters and women sunbathed on the doorsteps. This had once been the metropolis, the center of Jewish life in Europe. Poor, persecuted, fanatic, they had been unrelenting in their struggle to maintain their existence. Here the finest artisans of Poland, the bootmakers and quilt manufacturers, the leather salesmen and fine seamstresses had worked late into the night. The Mordecais and the Shmuels, who ran the groceries and the tailor shops, had taken young brides who sheared their lovely hair on the wedding eve and donned red wigs and a year after marriage lost most of their teeth in pregnancy and childbirth. Year after year the children came and were raised on the sidewalks or in airless cubbyholes at the rear of the stores or workshops. Scholars of the Talmud hunched their backs over the Holy Scriptures sixteen hours a day, and taught the sons of Mordecai and Shmuel how to become men on their thirteenth birthday. They peered at the faded pages and shook in prayer three times a day, unhurt by the poverty, the dirt, the ignorance around them. Theirs was a better world. They saw and shared the glory of Israel and conversed with their God. And when the same street, Nalewki, cleaned itself

up for the Sabbath, machines stopped their humming, peddlers stopped their shouting, speculators ceased their arguments and gesticulations, the tailors and the bootmakers donned black silk robes and long white socks, and singing and humming rose from every corner, the humming of ancient Hebrew chants. In dozens of tiny synagogues they covered their heads with white tasseled prayer shawls and lifted their dark eyes in ecstasy toward the sky. Nalewki belonged to the people of Sholom Aleichem, the great Jewish humorist who knew their sorrows and their joys and shared them as this street did. It was long and winding, and led to similar streets which all ended at the Jewish cemetery.

Ashes, rubble, silence, and the sweet air. Not even a tree would grow here now. The horses' hooves were the only sound. "Yes, it used to be busy here once," the driver said as if reading my thoughts. "They moved 500,000 of them to this place. From many countries they came. They fought hard when the Germans set it afire." He rubbed his nose with his finger. "The whole city was ablaze for three days and three nights when the Jews were burned." The horse slowly stopped of his own accord, as if in awe of trampling on what once was life. He neighed mournfully in the stillness. The driver began to pull gently on one rein. "That's all, the rest is the same."

I walked down Warecka Street looking for Number Nine, the house I had lived in when I was a schoolgirl in Warsaw. I had not yet been able to find a single old friend in this city which had turned out to be alien and strange. Memories kept crowding back, memories of busy streets and churchbells, of little girls in blue uniforms running to school, of theaters and parks, of chestnut trees and open cafés. But there had not yet been anything personal, anything on which I could put my finger and say "This was mine."

I came on it abruptly—Number Nine. It was not even a ruin,

just an ugly heap of sand and stone. But the thing that caught me was the piece of gate that still swung in midair. This was it. This was where old janitor Jan used to come cursing heavily because it was after closing hours. "One would think people would have a heart," he used to mumble. "This heavy gate—fifteen times a night these bones have to lift themselves from under the feathers, fifteen times a night, and push the gate and pull the gate just so that all you spoiled young folks can go gallivanting about." Fifty groszen would bring a change of tone. "May the Virgin Mary bless you, young lady, good night to you" He would toddle off to his feathers again, mumbling under his breath

I stood there fingering the twisted bars of the gate, wondering what had become of him. Across the street had stood the main post office, and beyond it the Prudential Building, the only skyscraper Warsaw had boasted. What a queer skeleton now, huge square holes, sixteen stories of black square holes. Farther on swung a crooked sign, *TRIANON*, with its empty neon teeth snarling in angry reminiscence of the past. We used to go there Saturday afternoons to see the latest American movies.

I walked along slowly, clinging tightly to the sensation of familiarity evoked by the gate

I came to Jasna Street, trying not to think about the chaos and confusion, about the young boys guarding every building with tommy guns, or even about the impressive reconstruction figures submitted to me by young government officials. At the end of the street the building of the Warsaw Philharmonic lay in ruins, its two stone muses staring up from the ground. The last concert I had heard there had been Bronislaw Huberman playing the Bach A Minor Concerto. Warsaw had been proud that night for he was Europe's idol and a Pole. He was in America now, I knew. Exile probably was not as difficult for him as it was for other artists, for his language was international. I had been to his concerts at Carnegie Hall in New York. They had

been gatherings of Europeans in exile, the audiences had listened to him remembering his concerts in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Prague, and they had crowded the foyers during the intermissions speaking every known Continental language. But he was little known to Americans. I wondered what returning would be for him.

Farther up the street lay the ruins of a café which had once been the gathering place of the literary men of Poland. It had been a typical Central European café, famed for its chocolate puffs, and its good coffee. Like other students, I had come here to gawk at the tall figure of Julian Tuwim, the great lyric poet, whose verses were easily quoted by children and adults everywhere in Poland, and Joseph Wittlin, Poland's candidate for the Nobel prize, who had written a modern Polish classic, *Salt of the Earth*, about the patient foot soldier. And another of the same group had been Antoni Slonimski, poet, playwright, whose social satire called *The Family* had stirred the country in the early thirties. I could still remember a line from it: "Dogs bark at beggars and Jews. That is their political program. People have taken over this program from the dogs."

I had met them all in exile. Joseph Wittlin was still living in Riverdale on the Hudson, in a small flat. I had come to know him well and could see what exile had done to his spirit. He had been unable to write for months on end. His mind would not work, he said. He had nothing against America, but it was not his soil. He had come from Lwow and had always written about the people of Galicia. He needed the stimulating discussions of Warsaw literary groups, or those of Paris which he used to visit at least once a year. He needed critics who watched closely for whatever he wrote. But most of all he needed the recognition he had had in Poland and the rest of Europe. He was a broken man now, still longing to go back to Poland but fearful that it was not the Poland he had known, especially he knew that he could not go back to the section of the country about

which he had always written, for Lwow was now part of the Soviet Ukraine.

And so he continued to sit in his small apartment, reading the newspapers, translating Homer again, writing his reminiscences and now and then talking to his Italian baker who once asked him, "Mr. Wittlin, do you think Dante actually visited the inferno?"

Wittlin replied, "A few years ago I would have answered you by delivering a long lecture on allegories and symbols, but after what happened to my country and to Europe, I am not so sure that Dante did not see the inferno with his own eyes."

Antoni Slonimski, who had spent the war in England, had gone back to Poland to see what it was like. I had seen him in Stockholm and he had told me of the shock and pain and loneliness of returning to Warsaw. There had been some compensation for this, however. He had been greeted by total strangers who had shaken his hand and told him that they had read his works which were now being published in several magazines and newspapers. He had visited the old Polish Theater, the only one remaining in Warsaw, and had sat in his old reviewer's seat in the fifth row to see what it would be like if he came back. Within a few months one of his plays was to be shown here again. He said he did not know how it would be if he returned. In the meantime, he went back to London to join UNESCO.

Julian Tuwim, the poet, had returned. I was to see him in a few hours.

It was drizzling when I left the Polonia late in the evening. The black curtains over the door, however, could not shut out the moisture or the mud which seemed to come creeping across the floor in front of the reception desk. Just within the outer door stood a boy with one leg, leaning on crutches. He was selling American cigarettes from a tray slung around his neck.

Beside him a bootblack sat on his shoestand rocking back and forth and singing. I paused, listened to the words for a moment, and decided to have my shoes cleaned so that I could catch the rest of the song. He was a middle-aged man with curly light hair and a stubby nose. As he gripped my ankle firmly and placed my foot on the box he began talking and singing continuously until he had finished

"They burned the ghetto, they didn't get me.

They burned them all in the stoves, they didn't get me.

Not Motya, they wouldn't get me I see them burning,

I see them burning, but not me, not me Ha, ha, ha, . . .

I'm going to make your shoes like mirrors, they will shine.

Nothing can' stop me, they'll shine. They burned the street,
the whole street, but I can always make shoes shine "

I took a *drozhka* to Tuwim's house. He lived in a new block of buildings overlooking the skeleton of the city. The buildings housed the official government publishing organization, the Polish Socialist Party Press, and a few writers

Under the brass name plate on Tuwim's door was a little card which said MR TUWIM RECEIVES ON TUESDAY BETWEEN FIVE AND SEVEN DO NOT DISTURB AT OTHER TIMES. A maid let me in and I could not believe this was Warsaw.

The apartment was bright and warm. The furniture was modern and comfortable. The floors were covered by rugs. I stood silent, letting myself enjoy it. Until this moment I had come to believe that there was not an inch of comfort in the city unless it was in a restaurant. I had little time to look around, however, for Tuwim came toward me, all poet.

Both arms were extended in a wide embrace. His aquiline face was raised high and, with his pointed chin and sharp sensitive nose, he seemed to be sailing into the wind. I caught sight of the wide brown patch that covered half of his left cheek,

the mark by which every Pole knew him. He threw his arms around me and then stepped back to survey me, holding his hands lightly on my shoulders. He had begun speaking liquid Russian the moment he saw me and he continued now without pause. From his fine mouth, and with the excitement in his eyes and now the flowing movements of his hands in the air, it sang like lyric poetry, although it was only, "How are you, when did you arrive, my friend, it is good to see you, how is everybody in New York? It has been so long since we saw each other, what do you think of our new Poland? Stefania, come see who is here."

He seemed to prance as he led me into his study and motioned me to a deep leather chair. "Stefania, come see who is here," he called to his wife again, and then he simply stood over me looking at me sentimentally, as if intending to bathe me with his Slavic soul. At last he said, "So you have come back to see Warsaw." Then with slow drama he walked toward the window, but did not draw the curtains or look out. With his back to me he said, this time in Polish, "Warszawa zburzona ale wspólna" (Warsaw destroyed but magnificent).

If I had not known this man's poetry intimately, if it were not for the fact that his translations of Pushkin and Gogol into Polish were masterpieces, if it were not for his poem to the Friend, his brilliant use of the Polish language, his tone poem written in exile on the Jews of Warsaw, I might have taken his pose for that of a matinee idol acting the part of a lyric poet. I remembered him in New York, in exile, when he had first arrived by way of Paris, Lisbon, and Brazil. He had lived in a small flat on 116th Street in Manhattan, and there he had filled thirteen notebooks with a long poem, "The Flowers of Poland," in which he recorded the beauty of his native land and the tragedy of its people. When the time came, it predicted, the dogs of Warsaw would take revenge on the enemy. He had written in solitude, and had published nothing. Once he had sat

in my house reading some of his verses to a group of other Poles, and one of the lines was, "I would have some vodka and herring—but the vodka is not vodka, the herring is not herring and I am not I"

He had come back now, he had seen the name plates hanging on the broken gates, name plates of people who had once been there and to whom things had once belonged. He had survived the tragic shock of nonrecognition, and now he did not look out of the window but he saw that Warsaw was magnificent.

Stefania Tuwim entered. Obviously she too had not been herself on 116th Street. Now her makeup was immaculate, her blond hair was swept up, every curl in its place, her blue cashmere sweater matched her eyes. She put out her hand in her calm elegant manner and smiled. "It is our turn to welcome you in Poland."

We sat around a small table as a maid brought in a tray of tea and pastries. There was only one mark in the setting—a strip of leather was torn from the club chair in which Tuwim sat.

"Have you been here long enough to see how wonderful it is?" Tuwim asked. "When you go back I want you to tell my friends how you found me here. I want you to tell them that I feel free again, that I am writing and publishing. I want you to tell them that on my wall there is no picture of Stalin but one of Roosevelt." He raised his arm and pointed to one of the well-known newspaper photos of President Roosevelt. "I will always have it there."

Stefania poured the tea and held out the plate of cakes. Tuwim stood up at her elbow and forced a few chocolate bonbons upon me. They were the famous Warsaw fudge balls. He bit into one of them and closed his eyes, then he held the half of it aloft and asked, "Would they know how to make this in New York?" I remembered that they were a hundred zlotys apiece now in Warsaw. He began walking about the room and talking about Poland and himself.

"This is the new Poland that I have come back to. I can see the tomorrow rising out of the ruins. We have nationalized our industry, we have done away with the nobility, we have liquidated feudalism, we have regained old Polish territories, we have three ports, we have great mines, we have forests, we have given education to the peasants, we have given land to the homeless, we . . ." He stopped and looked at me. "Do you know that the world is beginning to talk about the Polish experiment?"

"So far, I've seen quite a bit of trouble," I carefully interjected.

He nodded. "Of course there is trouble. We are undergoing a revolution. We have a stupid uneducated people, ridden with fascism, and we have to give them life by force. Poland is like a sick patient who must undergo an operation. If the patient is unwilling to go onto the operating table himself, you have to beat him over the head with a hammer and lay him down. And we'll do it too. We are on the road to success." He looked up again with a smile. "You know that the government will win the elections, no government in power loses elections if it doesn't want to." He winked. "And after that we will liquidate the opposition once and for all. The future is too beautiful to risk."

Stefania put her hand on his palm and cautioned, "Don't get so excited, Julek, dear. It isn't good for you." She then turned to me. "It really is nice here now, Pani Edith. You see how we live. The times of a struggling artist are over in Poland. You should tell that to Wittlin and our compatriots in America."

He picked up the conversation readily. "The government is doing everything for culture. We are supported by the state, we get living quarters, we are assured publication of our work. In Lodz we have an artist colony unmatched anywhere else. Our young writers live in an apartment block like this and devote themselves to editing a first-class literary magazine, writing

poetry, novels, and articles. They get special rations, and their salaries are tenfold those of a government minister. Our work is considered important in the rebuilding of the national spirit."

"Have you had your 'Flowers of Poland' published yet?" I asked.

"My dear, they have had to publish so much of my work that this has to wait a while. They've just put out three editions of my prewar poetry. I contribute regularly to practically every weekly, I deliver lectures, and I have a play opening soon." He walked over to the bookcase and pulled out a few paper-covered volumes. "Here, these have just appeared, and they're coming out all the time. I was speechless for seven long years, and now I can talk again."

He sat down and then jumped up once more and walked over to a desk in the corner. "I am on hundreds of committees. Look!" He drew out a rubber stamp and banged it on a paper napkin near my plate. It read, "Juljan Tuwim, Director Polish Army Theater." I wondered whether the rubber stamp was symbolic.

As I walked back toward the Polonia, to which I had moved, the drizzle had developed into a heavy rain. I passed an old *drozhka* driver. He cursed heavily and beat the bony emaciated horse with an unquenchable anger. I passed two boys standing at a corner with tommy guns in their arms. I remembered that all day on the streets I had heard a flow of bitter curses from the mouths of women, children, and old men as they haggled over some black-market item among the grotesque ruins. A British UNRRA representative had said to me, "This place is one big cauldron of hatred. Everyone hates the government, the government hates the people, and the people hate everyone." I wondered how it was that Julian Tuwim could go to the window, be afraid to look out, and say, nevertheless, that Warsaw was magnificent. Was the vanity of an artist so great?

Later I sat in the restaurant of the Polonia Hotel with a Socialist lawyer who was telling me about the progress that had been made in the year and a half since the end of the war.

The facts again were impressive. Production was 80 per cent of the prewar level, colonization of the western territories was almost complete, the land reform had been carried out successfully, the school reform was now in progress. Every Polish child could study free of charge and even go to a university, but the man was not happy. Finally he looked around the room and asked for another small bottle of vodka.

An orchestra was playing a mixture of old American tunes and Polish folk dances. In the middle of the floor couples dressed in an absurd assortment of clothes—cavalry boots, evening jackets, stiff collars, slacks, and well-tailored suits—were dancing with forced enthusiasm. Most of them seemed to be intoxicated. Here and there I recognized the pale thin face and the light eyes of what I knew at first glance to be a member of the aristocracy. Usually these were the ones who wore the cavalry boots and slapped them the loudest when they did the Mazurka.

My friend turned to me. "I know it is not a pretty picture. The whole thing isn't, but it seems it can't be different. We have to make the best of it. As a Socialist I would have liked to see a little more of what you tell me about Czechoslovakia, and I wonder why we can't have it in Poland. It is true that our people were sick. But perhaps one reason is that they have always been subjected to one extreme or another, they have never been shown a middle path. How can the government expect to work with the people if it will not take their character into consideration. The government has good plans, but they are very new, too new in some cases. The people have to be nursed toward acceptance, and I believe that where they won't accept the plans have to be modified to meet them halfway. Of course we Socialists have no choice and we are co-operating with the government. We cannot afford a civil war in Poland."

He threw down a vodka glass and shook his head "Maybe the Socialist cause, the way we knew it, is dying. Look at me Out of my class of 1894, which was a famous graduating class of the University of Vienna, with prominent Socialists in it, I know of no one who has remained. Where are our other leaders? Leon Blum, an old crumbling man, Masaryk dead, Sforza, an old man, too. And of the ones who came later, Roosevelt is also dead If there are no great leaders to inspire the people to follow a moderate progressive path, what can the people do? In the end they have to follow the strong."

It was my last evening in Warsaw John Strohm and I entered a crowded restaurant in Marszałkowska Street The tiny room, located at the base of a ruin, was thick with smoke and conversation, and a small orchestra was playing romantic Polish songs. But every table was taken

As we turned to walk out, a Soviet colonel and his companion good-naturedly beckoned to us to share their table We accepted eagerly I took my seat beside the colonel and Strohm sat opposite, next to the companion I noticed immediately that the man was a Polish officer of the Anders army, an odd sight in Warsaw, and even more mysterious in the company of a Soviet colonel

As Strohm and I studied the slip of paper which passed for a menu, I heard the colonel address his companion in broken Polish, "I think I'll like her, don't you?"

The Pole looked me over. "Yes, Mr Colonel"

Abruptly the colonel slid his arm around my waist and murmured to me in Russian "Little one, how would you like me to love you a bit tonight?"

I controlled the shock and pretended not to understand Instead I looked at Strohm across the table "John, darling, remember when we were first married? We always planned a trip to this part of Europe Well, here we are"

He looked up, startled. But the color of my cheeks must have told him the story, for he replied immediately, "Yes, darling, and it was a good idea to go without the children."

The Pole shot a quick glance at both of us and explained to the colonel, "They are husband and wife."

The Russian was unimpressed. "So what of it? You can always take care of him at a strategic moment." He turned to me once more. "What language do you speak?"

I smiled and looked inquisitively at the Pole. He translated. "I speak a little German."

"Oh, Deutsch, fine." The colonel put his arm around my waist again and now repeated his earlier proposition in fluent German.

I smiled politely as if it were all a naughty joke and asked him about his various medals, turning so as to release his arm. He had eight medals including an Order of Lenin. He was a heavily built man with shiny bald head, red cheeks, and thick red hands, and seemed perfectly sober.

"Let's not change the subject. I'm a good lover and you won't regret it."

Anywhere else in the world my reaction would have been drastic, but this was Warsaw and he was a Soviet colonel and I had to leave the city on the eleven-o'clock train. This was certainly no time to seek trouble. "Colonel, my husband is frightfully jealous," I replied coyly. "And if he hears you he'll be angry."

The colonel turned to his companion and I could see that his temper was rising. "It doesn't work. The husband must leave. Who do you suppose they are?"

The Pole adopted new tactics to humor his colonel. "Maybe you don't want her at all. Maybe they're just Hungarians. There are many of them around here now."

The Russian turned to me now. "How's Hungary?"

"Hungary? I have never been to Hungary. Have you?"

"You're sure?"

"Positive, why do you ask?"

The colonel glared at his companion. "You stupid bastard, she has never been to Hungary. Are you lying to make a fool of me? Order more vodka!"

The waiter brought the liquor immediately and the colonel proceeded to fill my glass. Strohm waved an admonishing finger at me. "Not for you, dear, doctor's orders."

"I am afraid I'm not supposed to drink," I told the colonel. "I have a bronchial asthma and liquor is sure to bring on an attack." The colonel let his eyes glide over me once again. "I'll still take a chance." His anger began to mount rapidly and his voice grew louder as he leaned over me. "I want your husband to go away. We want to have some fun." Other people in the restaurant were now looking our way. "You know it is an honor for you to have a Red Army officer interested in you. We don't associate with Polish women, they're all sick. We pick good-looking foreigners."

The Pole had been attempting to distract Strohm with comments on the orchestra and the restaurant. Now he turned and begged the colonel to leave. "I know another place, Mr. Colonel."

"Never mind, I'll talk some sense into her. Who are you really? Tell the truth."

"Don't you see my husband's uniform? We're Americans."

"Why did you come here? To watch us?"

I was thoroughly frightened now. I imagined being followed to the train and then turned back at the border and placed under cross-examination for hours, all because I didn't want to make love to a Soviet colonel. I wanted to get out as fast as possible. But I controlled myself. It was nothing, it was the Warsaw jitters, I was simply getting a Koestler phobia, it was my imagination running away with me.

The Pole was whispering excitedly to the colonel. "Mr. Col-

onel, I am afraid they're important Americans. I have just been talking with the man and I think they're government people. Please, sir. I know a place where we can find some girls."

Strohm was motioning to the waiter. "Colonel, I hope you'll allow me to drink a toast with you to Soviet-American friendship before my wife and I leave."

The Pole smiled in relief. "Yes, Mr. Colonel, let's all have a toast."

The Russian eyed us both for a long moment, then shrugged his hands and raised his glass. I relaxed my shoulders slightly and forced a smile. Strohm and I stood up after the drink and walked out slowly. Strohm waved his hand in a friendly gesture to the colonel. All eyes in the room followed us as we left.

I had one more bad moment on the way to the station in the UNRRA car. The driver suddenly announced to me: "You know, lady, we're being followed." Then he said, "But one always is followed after ten o'clock in Warsaw. Don't worry."

The next morning at Zebrzydowice the customs people were polite. They again copied the entire contents of my passport but no one turned me back for investigation. I got off to wash my hands at the station. There was no washroom but the proprietor of the little buffet let me use his kitchen and brought out a pail of clean water. When I took out my army towel, he took one look at its khaki color and said: "A nice lady like you cannot use such a dirty towel. You better use this." He handed me a soiled white linen cloth.

I looked up at his friendly Polish face with its broad smile.

The Dreamless

H O L L A N D

"IT LOOKS BETTER than it used to, much better." Van Riesel pointed to a heap of red bricks lying along the roadside. "Now, when we see bricks like these, it means that they're on their way up and not that they've just come down."

We had left the town of Alkmaar in the province of North Holland and were driving toward the Zuider Zee on our way to Friesland. Van Riesel was a young man of the Dutch Foreign Office who had agreed to drive me to Leeuwarden to visit a friend my husband had known during the early days of liberation. This was my second day in Holland and, despite the freezing cold and the sharp winds of early December, the first impressions were pleasing.

It had been even colder in France and Belgium where I had spent the past few weeks after leaving Poland. Paris, and for that matter Brussels, had done very little to lift my spirits after Poland. For in Paris, though there were no signs of physical destruction and although the city was as striking as ever, I had found people floundering in what seemed to me mental anarchy. There was a new type of aristocracy—the black-market aristocracy, which fed off the rest of the people who were too exhausted, hungry, and cold to rebuild their houses or get their

factories going Most didn't know why they should anyhow. Jim Collins' "I couldn't care less" in London had become "*Je m'en fou pas mal*" in Paris Brussels had been livelier and louder but hardly less confused.

No sooner had I crossed into Holland, however, than the air felt fresher. From the train windows I could see clean roads, children skating on frozen canals, trim-looking nuns and priests walking in pleasant, spotless villages. Here and there a man could be seen hammering nails into the roof of his house. I noticed a group of four men breaking the ice of a canal to make way for a tiny boat loaded with cement. All the way to Amsterdam these images had repeated themselves It was a picture of reconstruction in the individual personal sense. By the time I had reached the city I felt that every person in the country was in one way or another involved in hammering, plastering, or painting.

Now as we drove toward Friesland the picture was duplicated. We were still passing the heaps of bricks which covered at least two acres. They were dusted by a light snow.

"Maybe you can call the reconstruction a minor miracle," Van Riesel was saying quietly. "All the flooded areas have been drained dry. You will see as we drive that all the roads are now in good shape. They used to be bad. The Germans retreated up through here. Every road in the country had a road block. You can still see the edges of it along the sides"

He spoke in a dull monotone, as if quoting a well-learned lesson. I could excuse him this, however, for he was a Foreign Office man taking a foreign visitor through the country

He went on: "Most of the bridges are up again. Even the temporary ones that the Canadians put up have been replaced. We are good with our hands in Holland, but our minds are still slow"

"Why do you say that?"

He looked up and there was an almost melancholy expression

on his face "Perhaps we had it too good in Holland before the war. We can't see beyond it." He laughed "Maybe what we need is a dream When you work hard, you know, you sleep heavily and you don't dream"

We drove across the long dike that separates the Zuider Zee from the sea At the far end the great locks which had been almost completely destroyed by the retreating Germans were now partly back in commission It took us a half hour to wind our way over a narrow improvised road that zigzagged among the blown-up walls It was flanked on both sides by countless bunkers, pillboxes, cannon sites, trenches, and tangles of barbed wire It was a year and a half after liberation but it would probably take many more months before these remnants of the bitter fighting in Holland could be cleared away

It was late in the afternoon when we reached Leeuwarden, the capital of Friesland There had been a heavy fall of snow up here People wrapped in thin coats and wearing light caps or sometimes a woolen hat seemed to crouch as they pushed through the snow on the wide streets Van Riesel, who was on his way to Groningen and was to pick me up on his way back the next morning, dropped me at the home of Vincent Martin on a street of square two-story buildings.

We sat at dinner in a back parlor which, like Elsa Kewes's kitchen in Shiplake and Mrs. Bergen's bedroom in Oslo, was the center of all home life There was no room for standing Every possible piece of furniture had been squeezed in here The most prominent were an ancient cabinet radio, an unpainted bookcase crowded with dark-looking volumes to remind you that this was a school teacher's house, a small round table on which the dinner was spread, and in the corner a tiny woodburner We bowed our heads as Martin, a devout Calvinist, whispered a brief prayer.

There were four of us at the table Martin himself was a mid-

dle-aged man with thinning hair, who had spent his life teaching English in a local high school. He wore a dark-gray suit, no doubt put on in honor of a visitor, a fresh white collar attached to a dull blue shirt, and a faded necktie. He was proud of his English. He spoke as a school teacher would, in slow carefully rounded sentences. He expected his children, Jan who was sixteen and Willy who was eleven, to speak their English carefully too, and if they hesitated for a word, he would not correct or help them but would wait until they had found it themselves. His wife was shy, for her English was not good. I knew that they spoke German and that had I been visiting them before the war the conversation would have gone smoothly in that language. But I had already learned on the Continent that it was decidedly tactless and even insulting to ask a Norwegian, Czech, Pole, Frenchman, or Hollander whether he spoke German.

"How is your husband?" Martin asked. "He was here in the exciting days. It was very warm then." Mrs. Martin passed around the inevitable plate of steaming potatoes which I had by now learned to expect as the major course at every meal in almost every country of Europe. But this time the potatoes were taking second place, for there was a plate of spam which, after I had taken my portion and after the children had happily taken theirs, the parents did not touch.

"Your husband came with books and magazines. They were the first we had seen in years," Martin continued.

His wife lifted her head. "It was very nice to be so close to America then." She spoke very slowly.

"Unfortunately, we have not had much since then. We have our own newspapers now, of course, but they are very small and they can only tell us about local matters. The radio is broken and Philips is working for export only." He smiled. "In a way we feel almost as cut off as during the occupation." The children ate in silence. "In those days there were Americans who

visited us, your husband and others from SHAFF, the Canadians and the British. There was always somebody. We had news and we felt that something new was happening. That shouldn't have ended so soon."

"I suppose that you have felt it very keenly because you teach English and miss the literature you need," I remarked.

Martin shook his head emphatically. "On the contrary, I simply teach the English language and classical American and English literature and those books are always around somewhere. What we have needed is the kind of material that would fill in all the gaps for us. When we listened to the radio or read pamphlets during the war, we were getting snatches of information. Of course it was important to us to know where an army was and what German city had been bombed. But now we want to know not only what went on between the bombings but what has been going on since the end of the war. What others think. After this war, Holland felt part of the world. Last time we were neutral and we had little to do with the others. This time the words Canada, England, America, France, Belgium were close. We thought a contact would remain." He shrugged his shoulders. "I suppose it was just another one of the hopes of liberation days." He spoke in a lifeless tone. At first I attributed it to his being a school teacher, but then I remembered the statistical manner in which Van Riesel had reported what had seemed to me the exciting figures of reconstruction.

"You've been fulfilling a lot of those hopes, though, more than the other countries I've visited. People are working, and the reconstruction looks amazing to me." I tried to find out what the disappointment in his voice meant. Both Mrs. Martin and the children had finished eating their potatoes and were dunking pieces of bread in a dish of gravy. They followed the discussion but remained silent as if aware that it was between a visitor and the head of the household who was answering the

questions for all of them. Mr. Martin thought for a moment and then replied

"Yes, the reconstruction is going well, but what happens when it stops? We were always a rich country in Holland and our standard of living was one of the highest in the world. The people feel now that everything is coming to an end and nothing has much future"

"Why is that?" I asked.

"Take our farmers right around here. I can't understand them. You know, Friesland is one of the greatest agricultural areas in the world" There was a flicker of pride in his voice. "But now no one would know it. During the war the farmers were not pleasant people. We used to say that every farmer had two pianos in his house. People were hungry and gave everything to the farmers for food and they took it. They became very rich during the war. Yet at the end they said they hated the Germans most. Why, right here they would come into the Burgomaster's house and rave about the pigs and the cows and the horses the Germans had taken away with them. Every one of them said he could point out his prize bull right across the border, fifty miles away."

He shrugged again, puzzled. "Now the talk is quite different. They are angry again, but this time at the government and at the British and Americans. They want to send their cabbages and potatoes across the border to Germany the way they used to before the war. The other day there was a protest meeting of the local farmers. They insisted that trade with Germany be resumed. They say they can't exist without it." He paused and looked at me. After a while he continued, "I don't know. They may be right. After all, they have to sell their goods and they are used to shipping them just across the border. It's all so confusing, though. They have to bury their lettuce while other countries are starving and they cry because they can't

sell to the enemy. Nobody knows what to say to them. In fact, everybody is just as confused.

Mrs. Martin looked up and smiled. "I think Mr. Martin is worrying too much. He is not as practical as the farmer."

"I suppose that's the trouble. I am not practical," Martin put in. "But in the war, we used to think a lot. There was nothing else we could do. We sat here long nights just thinking, sometimes not even talking because it was dangerous." He stood up and went to the bookcase. "I studied Hebrew which I had always heard was a thoughtful and beautiful language." He drew a few books from the shelves and laid them on the table. "It did help me think—though I didn't master the language. I thought that when it was all over things would be different. I say truthfully that I don't know what I mean when I say different. It was very good here before the war. But there was a war, wasn't there? Doesn't that mean that it wasn't good, even if we thought so then? Some people think you can just blame it on Germany or on the big powers and say that the small nations like Holland were innocent. I am a religious man and I don't believe that anyone is wholly innocent or that anyone is wholly to blame. All of us had something wrong with us. But now all we want to do is go right back and have those good things we had before, even if we have to pay a heavy moral price for them. I don't think that's right. But who is to lead the way in another direction? The Dutch Government? I don't think so. It's entangled in reconstructions, price controls, export controls, Far East problems, political clashes between the Catholics and the Social Democrats, building a big airline, settling strikes. It seems to me—" he paused for a moment as if ashamed to go on and then added apologetically "—perhaps just because I am a school teacher in a small city, that what is lacking is—" he groped for words "—someone who would make the future exciting."

Mrs. Martin rose and began clearing the table. The children

rose with her. Martin shot a glance at them, however, and they all sat down for the last brief prayer to close the meal.

After dinner Martin suggested we take a walk through the town. I readily agreed. It was dark except for a few weak lights shining from house windows. We passed the school building at which Martin taught. The lights were on in the hallway and people were climbing the steps. "There is probably some kind of lecture or concert," he explained "There is always something at night, even in the coldest weather, and I don't think it's because they come here to get warm. It's even colder in there than it is out here. But they all go to listen to anybody who speaks."

We walked for another half hour. Except for the people climbing the steps of the school house there was little or no movement. Only one cinema was open, showing an old French movie.

When we returned the temperature in the house hovered around zero. All through our walk and afterward Martin said little, as if he was sorry to have spoken as much as he had at dinner. Mrs. Martin was sitting near the stove working on some clothes. The children had apparently gone to bed.

The whole day, Van Riesel's monotone, the dinner, the walk through the empty town, and the quiet in the house, were strangely contrasted with the picture of energetic reconstruction which I had seen so far.

Mrs. Martin pointed to a pot of water simmering on the stove. "I have been preparing some hot water for you"

I must have looked puzzled because Martin laughed "I am afraid that you'll need a hot bottle in bed to keep you warm, if it doesn't freeze before you get there"

We sat for a few moments exchanging banalities and then Martin rose to lead me to my bedroom.

As we went up the steps it seemed to grow progressively colder and it was not until we reached a third-floor finished

attic that he turned to explain "We had to close off most of the rooms downstairs because all of them need serious repairs. The prices are so high that we can't manage it. So you'll have to spend the night here. I hope the bottle will help." He paused. "I would like to show you something."

He led me to a corner of the room where we had to stoop because the eave came down here. Martin dropped to his knees and loosened a board in the wall.

"This is where my oldest son spent much of the occupation."

There was just enough space for a man to crawl through. It led to the outer wall of the house and it was obvious that the boy could have done nothing but lie in one position and try to protect himself from the wind and rain which probably came in here easily.

"We used to give him our old clothes and all the newspapers he could take with him so that he could stuff them all around him to keep warm," Martin continued "He was seventeen and the Germans had issued orders for all Dutchmen between sixteen and thirty-five to report for slave labor. Most of the young men were hidden like this" He looked grotesque crouching on his knees in his stiff collar and dark suit, looking up at me as he held the board aside.

"Where is he now?" I asked.

He rose and shook the dust off his knees "He survived all right. He's a strong boy. He went South to Maastricht where he's working in the mines. He comes up to see us every few months. He's a good boy."

We went into my room which was just large enough to hold a double bed with steep pillows and a great feather quilt.

"Does your son like it at Maastricht? They're planning to nationalize the mines down there, aren't they?" I asked.

"Yes. But he doesn't say much about that in his letters. I am worried about him. He writes seldom, but when he does I get the same feeling that I have when I speak to most of the young

people around here There is no excitement in any of them. They work hard and they seem so dissatisfied My boy, for instance, writes about the world and how he doesn't understand things. Sometimes I think he is going left The other day he wrote us that there was a Communist meeting down there and the speakers made much sense, more than anybody else."

He walked over to turn the corner of my quilt and sighed. "You must be tired now. Good night" He walked slowly out of the room

I remembered Amsterdam as being made up of many arcs and culves And it was the first impression I had this time. The main canals culved in concentric arcs around the city so that no matter in what direction I walked I crossed them. The little bridges curved over them The cobblestone quays bordering the canals had been worn concave.

But I missed the bicycles Instead there was the postwar streetcar which ran more often than it did in other cities, but was no less shabby and bulged equally The Germans had stolen most of the bicycles and the rest had gradually fallen apart. Now and then I saw a man pumping along on wheels without tires or with thin hard-rubber tires I remembered the fleets of them carrying packages, families, children, making the streets look as if they were perpetually running streams Here again the well-worn pattern of ill-clad people, of cracked shoes, of empty stores, of dim lights in the evening repeated itself. Like the bridges of Prague, the city had suffered little from the attrition of occupation because of its age and stateliness. The Rokin, the avenue of antiquarians, was still the same, the shop-windows displayed rare books and old maps and jade, teakwood, and ebony figures. The *Grachten* (canal streets) had not changed either, and it seemed that the paint had hardly worn away from the heavy green and black doors with their shiny brass knockers and the black wrought-iron railings that lined them. I knew

that behind each of these doors the trade that had built and kept together the third largest empire in the world had been carried on for years. But there was an air of unusual quiet about them now, and for that matter about the entire city.

I met Hank Van Randvijk at a private club on one of the small side streets. He was a tall man with broad shoulders and heavy features. He had been a poet until the war, when he joined the underground as founder of one of the secret newspapers. Now he had given up poetry for politics. His newspaper had become the leading liberal weekly in the country. I was looking forward to seeing him for I knew that he was well informed and commanded great respect among many Hollanders. I had met

He greeted me with his usual joviality, steered me to a corner table in the tiny bar of the club, and immediately set to work asking dozens of questions about the countries I had visited. The complaints I had heard from Martin in Leeuwarden were repeated by him but with greater emphasis. Though he was the editor of an important magazine, he said he felt cut off, he couldn't get enough foreign reports, and he was planning to make a tour at all costs of other countries in Europe to see if there wasn't someone who might be able to "show us some way out of the mess."

"What is the mess, Hank?" I asked when he had paused for breath between questions about Poland and Czechoslovakia. "I admit I have felt queer since my second day in Holland. It's not difficult to see two things here. One, that everybody is working hard, and things are being repaired, and two, that nobody is happy. They don't go together."

Van Randvijk twisted his wedding band and nodded vigorously. "That's right, they don't go together and that's the trouble. Everybody said—and we Dutch said it first—work, work, work, and all your problems will be solved. Drain your flooded

lands, rebuild your bridges, put glass in the windows, and just keep doing it until everything is fine. Export, export, export. Get dollars and everything will be solved. That's the slogan that comes from the whole of Europe." He stopped to pour a small glass of Bols gin. "They are making out the best of all," he said, pointing to the bottle. "Everybody needs a drink all the time. So you keep your head to the ground and work and then you lift your head and ask, What next? And that's when the trouble begins."

"But," I interrupted, "I have learned some things since I've been here. You have an overpopulation on the land but you're draining another section of the Zuider Zee. That's a great project which will give you more land for the farmers."

He nodded his head. "That's true."

"You want dollars, so you've built up the finest airline on the Continent. Every Dutchman I've met is immensely proud of KLM."

He leaned forward on the table with his chin on his hand. "That's right. Even I am proud of it. We haven't had a single accident yet—knock on wood."

"To build your export, Philips is producing 85 per cent of prewar level. You've carried out one of the most drastic monetary reforms ever tried by a single country."

"Right again."

"You're planning nationalization of the mines and the bank. You're planning a customs union with Belgium and Luxemburg. All this seems very impressive."

Van Randviijk leaned back in his chair and scowled at me. "You've learned many things. Our foreign office puts out good releases. All the correspondents who come up here get these releases. They stay around for three days, perhaps a week, and send telegrams and write editorials about the wonderful conditions in Holland." He was not bitter but sarcastic and somewhat dramatic. "What is the truth? The truth is that all these

things are meaningless, because we are caught in a trap and there is nobody who knows how to get us out of it."

He stretched his palm and recounted each point on his fingers. "Let me give you some facts. First, there is Indonesia—"

He stopped abruptly and jumped to his feet as a group of people entered the door. They were all dressed in evening clothes. He greeted them loudly and with a sweeping gesture introduced me. I recognized one as a publisher who was also a leader in the liberal movement and was connected with Van Randviyk's weekly. A second was a businessman. They were accompanied by ladies in long dinner dresses and a few other couples who drifted toward the bar. Van Randviyk pulled up two chairs for the businessman and publisher and then plunged back into our conversation.

"So there is Indonesia. The rebellion out there immediately took our problems out of the class of the simple reconstruction problem that most other countries have. We are losing the East Indies."

"That is not exactly so." The publisher, a man with blond hair and rimless glasses, shook his head. "The treaty of Linggadjati may preserve our interests there."

"Not unless we get very strong guarantees from Soekarno and his rebels," inserted the businessman, "and even then how sure can we be that they'll keep their word? They are nothing but collaborators. How can we trust them now? Besides, I don't believe that they have control over the natives."

This was the subject on every Hollander's lips. Ever since the uprising in the Dutch East Indies, which had broken out at the end of the war, the Dutch had been trying to find some means of compromise to save as much as they could of their empire, while satisfying as many demands as possible of Soekarno and Sjahrir, the leaders of the Indonesian Independence movement. The latest development was the Linggadjati agreement whereby Indonesia was to be quasi-independent. Java, Sumatra, and other

smaller islands were to form a federation which was in turn to be joined to Holland in a union headed by the Queen. The concern of the Dutch now was to re-establish peaceful conditions in the area so that commerce could be resumed as quickly as possible.

The businessman continued. "The treaty of Linggadjat is so far only a piece of paper. We have lost control in the Indies. And this is what it means. Before the war at least 15 per cent of our national income depended directly on those colonies. Besides that, a large percentage of our national income was indirectly dependent on our ownership of the East Indies. More than three hundred thousand Dutch workers—that's about one-third of all the non-agricultural labor in the country—drew wages from ship industries, machinery factories, and export firms directly or indirectly dependent on investments out there. Almost this whole city of Amsterdam depends on the Far East. Our businesses invested more than one and a half billion dollars in the islands."

Van Randvijk interrupted. "And drew profits up to 250 per cent."

The businessman waved his hand. "It doesn't matter. We stand to lose more than we can afford if we give them their independence. Mark my words, once the Indonesians get things in their own hands they will begin throwing us out and the Americans will begin pouring their dollars in."

The publisher shook his head. "I think they'll probably stick with us. After all, we developed the islands, and they have less to fear from us than they do from America. The important thing is to have peace out there so that we can get things moving again. It's terrible to see this city so dead."

Van Randvijk ran a hand through his thick hair. "Everybody sits around and talks about whether or not we should give the Indonesians their independence. But the fact remains that there is no trade and that we did delay everything with our

weak approach and probably made things worse by refusing at the beginning even to consider a compromise. Now everybody in the country is melancholy because he has finally wakened to the fact that sooner or later he will have to live without Indonesia "

He paused and leaned toward me. "But that's only one part of it. On the other side is Germany. And we don't know how to live without her. The facts here are even more depressing. We were always tied to Germany more than any other country. We bought more goods from her than we did from anyone. Half of all our industrial equipment came from Germany. Our factories are running at 50 per cent capacity because they can't get parts they need from Germany. And now the industrialists and the government have a brilliant plan. We were so dependent on Germany before, they say, let's make ourselves just as dependent now." He was bitterly sarcastic this time. "They are requesting that the British and Americans permit our experts to go into Germany to rebuild plants. And they even want to give credits to German firms. It's a funny thing to have fought a war about that."

The businessman shrugged. "Van Randviyk is right, of course. But we must be practical. The British and the Americans are being practical. They are being so practical that they are hurting us in order to save themselves dollars. They're building up Bremen and Hamburg as German ports and all that happens is that our Rotterdam, which depended on Germany for its business before the war, will be out of work now. Our reconstruction can't really begin without Germany." There was a note of sad resignation in his voice.

Van Randviyk laughed. "Besides, there is one more little matter. Our industrialists are probably anxious about our relations with Germany because they invested about six hundred million dollars in German industry between 1933 and 1939."

The publisher shook his head sadly. "We had many collabora-

tors in Holland for that reason. They felt Holland was too closely tied to Germany to take any chances."

I looked at Van Randvijk. "Where do you stand on the problem? What's your attitude toward Holland's re-establishing relations with Germany?"

He shook his head and all of them shook their heads with him. "That's the worst problem of all. I don't know what to think about it. None of us do. It's just depressing."

A girl in evening dress sitting at the bar began singing in a high voice and then a man joined in.

"We have not been able to think of an alternative," the publisher said despondently. "That's what makes us all feel worst of all." He smiled sadly. "We liberals are against the reactionaries, of course. And they are the ones who are urging these credits."

"But everybody knows we must do it," the businessman said.

Some of the people at the bar, several of them in full evening dress, had drifted toward our table. They stood nodding their heads while they sipped their drinks.

"All these people here," Van Randvijk said, swinging his arm to include the whole group, "are liberals. They are good people but they can't figure out what we should do."

"And because they can't," the businessman said, "the Communists are winning votes."

"That's quite true," said the publisher. "The Communists won the most votes right here in Amsterdam in the last election and they're gaining ground in the mining districts and down in Rotterdam among the dockworkers."

Several people in the group shook their heads sadly.

"That's because the Socialist leaders are so weak," the publisher commented.

"They are controlled by the Catholic party," a man in the standing group put in.

"Scheimerhorn was a good man but he gave in to the British," said another.

"Van Kleffens has been taking the British chestnuts out of the fire at the UN meetings," the publisher remarked.

"Perhaps if we could establish close relations with France and Eastern Europe and change our whole economic outlook," Van Randvijk suggested.

They all pondered this for a few moments, turning their glasses in their hands and wrinkling their foreheads

"That's not so easy," said someone.

"It would throw us into the arms of the Communists," said another.

"Right now we are in the grip of the industrialists."

"And the Catholics"

"The labor unions are controlled by Catholics."

"You can't understand Holland unless you know how ridden we are by religious cleavages these days," Van Randvijk said. "We never used to have it"

The liberals began drifting back to the bar. One man stopped to brush a drop of liquor from his evening trousers.

The girl who had been singing rose unsteadily from her seat at the bar and began talking loudly to the room at large. Then she came toward us and addressed me. "I heard you speak German," she declared.

I shook my head.

"Yes, I did," she shouted. "I heard you. We don't speak German here Listen to me! We don't speak German here" She glared at me and then whirled and walked with difficult dignity back to her seat

"The trouble," I heard one liberal saying to another as we left, "is that we are split in all directions The two horses, Germany and Indonesia, tear us apart."

"Perhaps if the Queen had acted sooner," said someone.

"It's hopeless," said another

It took me the whole day to find the Shussheims. I went to their old flat on Parnassusweg, but the people living there merely shook their heads. They had never heard of them. The grocer on the corner, however, smiled broadly when I mentioned the name. Then he spoke in a rapid Dutch, too fast for me to understand. Finally he leaned over the counter and spoke German in a low voice. He gave me their new address, explained that they were in fine health and that he had seen them only the day before, and assured me that they would be very happy to receive me. Then he laughed loudly "Every foreigner is welcome these days, especially from America"

They lived in a typical Amsterdam apartment house with a steep flight of stone steps leading to the door.

Hans received me with a kiss on both cheeks and a shout to his wife that I had come. They had known that I was on my way to Holland, but had not known exactly when to expect me. The room we entered was cheerful, but here again it was the only one in use, the rest of the place having been closed off for lack of coal.

"You've come just in time for dinner," Greta exclaimed. And when she saw the doubtful look on my face she added, "Don't worry, we have plenty. It's not so difficult as people say"

Two boys came up and politely shook my hand. I remembered Peter, a boy of ten. He had been about three when I last saw him. But the other, who was older, was a stranger. He took my hand and bowed awkwardly from the waist and said very slowly, "How do you do"

After the first rush of excitement there was an awkward staring. Hans had taken a chair where he could lean his elbow on the corner of the table. I had remembered him just as he looked now, slightly better dressed but with the same continuous smile and the same lively dark eyes. Greta had grown somewhat stouter, I could attribute it to tulip bulbs and starches. She

was wearing one of the dresses I had sent her from America on first hearing that they had come through the war alive

"Why are you staring like that?" Hans asked

I felt my face changing color I knew that I must have been looking at them the way Mrs Shoenfeld's milliner had stared at her in Prague. Perhaps Hans was thinking that my next words would be, "I thought you were gassed"

I tried to explain "You are just the way you used to be, the first Jewish friends I have met in Europe who are like this"

Greta nodded "I can understand that But you see we were never in a camp"

"That's true It wasn't easy, but it was no more difficult for us than it was for many, many Dutchmen. We were lucky"

The older boy, David, had stretched himself out on the floor and was talking to someone in Dutch on the telephone Peter sat beside him, leafing the pages of a school book

Greta caught my amused glance "You'd never think that their lives weren't like this last year, would you?"

"David is our new son," Hans explained "He was hidden by the same Catholic priest outside of Utrecht who hid Peter during the occupation His parents never returned, so he's going to stay with us" He looked up at both boys and said something in Dutch Then he turned to me, smiling "They do their school work over the telephone and we have to remind them that we are allowed just so much electricity for the phone" He rose and disappeared for a moment and then returned with a box

"Here is something we've been saving for you Remember?" He opened the box and in it were the famous Dutch coffee caramels, *Hopjes*, which he knew I had always liked "You probably get them in America because they're all going for export, but this time they gave us some in the monthly sweets ration"

I thanked him awkwardly and was aware that I was still acting strangely I could not get over the normalcy with which

they behaved. I remembered their first letter which had reached me in America about three months after Holland's liberation. Instead of following the deportation orders of the Germans, like many another Dutchman they had gone into hiding with false papers. The boy had been sent off to live with a Catholic priest and there had been no contact with him for three years. Greta and Hans, meanwhile, had drifted from city to city pretending that they were refugees from war-torn areas.

Hans, formerly a magazine publisher, had been a carpenter, salesman, streetcleaner, and finally he and Greta had established a strange underground business. Greta discovered that she had a facility with paints and they devised an odd method of reshaping old bottles and painting them so that they would be usable as vases. The business, Hans explained, had gone well because there were no vases, no jars, no glassware of any kind obtainable except these remade old containers. They had been able to pose as itinerant vendors and thus forego presenting papers or registering for work with the German labor offices. Nevertheless, they had had many a narrow escape, had gone for days on end without food, and had spent weeks sitting in a tiny cellar room when the Gestapo was raiding the area. It had been impossible to contact Peter because of the risk to the priest involved.

Hans spoke in his cheerful manner. "You are still surprised, aren't you? We were extremely lucky. Most of our friends disappeared. I'll give you some names, perhaps you can find them more easily from America."

"How do you find it today, Hans? Are you able to get back into your old business?"

"No I am not even going to try."

Greta put in, "We're doing fine with our bottles now. We developed it into a real art and people still need them badly." She brought out two jam jars attractively painted with Dutch designs

Hans continued, "It's difficult to get paper for publishing

now. And anyhow things are not the same as they used to be before the war."

"Do you personally feel a difference because you are a Jew?" I asked.

Both of them shook their heads. "You can't put it that way," Hans said. "It's something much more general than that. There has been a complete reshuffling of people and jobs. For example, in my field a lot of the young men who did a wonderful job as underground editors and publishers have been carrying over their activities. I wouldn't like to come up and try to reclaim my old customers from them just because I returned."

"But why not?"

"Because in a way I feel that the society around me is still sensitive. We're still a little bit outside. You know, here in Holland we never felt we were Jews. We were Dutch. The Germans segregated us, established a Jewish community, registered us, and it was done so insidiously that the idea slipped into the minds of Dutch people without their even knowing it. It will take them a very long time to be again the way they used to be before the war. I suppose that goes for all things, not just the Jews."

"I'm afraid that Edith is going to misunderstand you, Hans. There is no country where religious tolerance is so great. The differences now have nothing to do with religion. It's the years of propaganda."

"And a political frustration," Hans interrupted. "You've probably noticed the general morale is low. You know about the Indonesian problem and the German problem."

"Take the children, for instance, they have no problem," Greta interrupted. "They returned after three years of Catholic training. They're back in school. They've had no serious psychological difficulties getting adjusted to a home life, as you see." We looked at both of them lying on their stomachs reading.

Greta rose to set the table Hans leaned back and spoke dreamily "Do you know something that I've thought about doing for months and months now? It's a strange thing, you'd say, because you know me from before the war when I was a very solid and, I suppose, successful businessman. But what we want to do is save as much money as we can as fast as we can and then take all four of us and go to America. Not settle in one spot, but buy a trailer and move around the country selling these vases to support ourselves, and just forget about the whole world Don't laugh, I really want to do it and that's why I'm not settling down in any serious business undertaking here"

We sat at dinner. There wasn't much besides a few cold cuts, some bread and jam. The boys eagerly devoured slice after slice of bread, sprinkling it with tiny colored sugar candies Hans and Greta were obviously happy. And I thought that perhaps it was the first time in many months they had had visitors

Philip Pikelharing, a young Hollander who had recently returned to Holland with his wife and children after having spent ten years in Indonesia, the last four in a Japanese prison camp, picked me up at my hotel in Amsterdam to drive me to The Hague. His wife was to join us there and the three of us were to continue to Arnhem where Philip was to see one of his government colleagues in the Social Welfare Department. It was a gray day, as cold as ever Philip had a small Citroen which hardly shut out the sharp wind sweeping in from the harbor

The route from Amsterdam to The Hague had always been famous in the spring for the acres of red, white, and yellow tulips which lined both sides of the road. The fields were flat and gray now in the winter, and there was little sign of life. We passed the ruins of the old Amsterdam airdrome and then the grotesque cement remains of what was once supposed to have become a great highway overpass Beyond the university

town of Leyden a group of men were working at the side of the road

"Collaborators," Philip explained "We've been using them to build up the country. The trouble is that we don't use enough of them "

At Wassenaar, the wealthy residential section just outside The Hague, he pointed to shattered houses Here and there I saw the remains of a large cement platform in the woods.

"V2 launching sites Lots of them fell back and destroyed the houses around here The Germans messed up this place too when they were retreating."

The destruction continued into The Hague. As we entered the city I asked about a great area of rubble

"This section was bombed by the RAF," Pekelharing replied. "The British were aiming at the Gestapo headquarters which was not far from here, and they missed It wasn't so bad the first time, but they did it three nights in a row. I wasn't here, of course, but I've heard a lot about it since I returned "

During the day, The Hague appeared to be quieter than Amsterdam The old banks and trading houses, the Queen's Reception Palace, the ancient Binnenhof, which held the parliament, the tiny prison in which the De Witts had been tortured, were as unchanged as the doors along the *Grachts* in Amsterdam. I knew that this was a city of parliaments, the International Court, the Palace of Justice, and, in the seventeenth century, the home of Spinoza, and I imagined from looking at it now that it was still the sleepy gentle city I had visited on my way to the famous beach resort of Scheveningen several times before the war But later, when it had grown dark, Philip and I took a walk through the streets and there was no sign of dignity anywhere

Tiny, dirty black-market restaurants lined the side streets The sound of American swing music came from all of them. Streetwalkers and mysterious looking men whispered to pass-

ers-by at the corners, and I watched American cigarettes change hands at what I knew to be the equivalent of about two dollars a package. Just behind the Palace of Justice, young people thronged at a movie house which showed a repertoire of five or six prewar foreign films, but devoted most of its program to dance music. After watching the dull cinema for an hour or so, the youths bought drinks in the balconies, roamed about until they found themselves girls—perhaps by flashing some cigarettes. Then the couples danced, hugging each other closely. At night The Hague was more like a French port city than the seat of the Dutch government.

Philip lived with his wife Marie and their two children in the three back rooms of an enormous apartment which they had been lent by their aunt. Marie wore man's trousers, a man's sweater, and a nondescript kerchief around her head. She was gloomy and cold. Though I knew that she could be pretty, it was hard to see any traces of that now. I gave her immediately the two packages of cigarettes I had saved for her, for I knew that smoking had become an addiction. She smoked nervously, holding the cigarette between her thumb and forefinger and shivering all the time. "I'll never be warm again," she kept repeating. "It's horrible."

The flat looked warmer than it was, for it was draped with heavy damasks and brocades from the Far East. Beaded shawls hung on the walls. In one corner hung a row of Indonesian wood carvings. The lamp shades were dark and embroidered with strange figures of birds and animals. Ivory plaques stood on a teakwood table leaning against the wall. It was not until the aunt came in for a moment that these surroundings came to life. In her I could see immediately that there was a long tradition of Eastern relations and perhaps even some Indonesian blood in the family. Her black hair was combed back on her head. She wore a heavy shawl over her shoulders and walked erectly. She smiled once to greet me, sat on the edge of a sofa

to smoke a cigarette quickly, spoke a few words of British English. The few words were devoted, for no particular reason at all, to expressing what was apparently an all-consuming bitterness toward the Dutch Government, the British, and the Indonesian natives—and then she left us.

"That's all we ever see of her," Marie said "And a good thing, too." She gathered up the cigarette butts from the ash tray. "We have a place now, and we'll probably move soon. But we must wait in order to get some spoons and knives and forks and plates and saucers. They're impossible to buy except on the black market and we can't afford it"

We left early in the morning for Arnhem. On the way out I asked if we couldn't go by way of Scheveningen, which was just outside The Hague. I remembered it well for its lovely trees, pure white sand, and the miles of dunes. I knew that Scheveningen had been destroyed by the Germans and by the Dutch themselves who had gone there during the "Hunger Winter" of 1941 to find firewood and whatever edible berries they could. What I saw now was a tangle of barbed wire and zigzagged trenches cutting across what had been lovely gardens. The great hotels were gutted by fire and bombs. Miles of anti-invasion pilons and bunkers lined the beach. Worst of all were the ragged holes—hundreds of them—where there had been trees. It looked as if the trees had been each uprooted at a single stroke.

"My aunt told me how they used to come down here and dig like animals in the ground to get out as many of the roots as possible to burn," Pekelharing said "And when I saw it for the first time after returning it made me feel that perhaps our experiences in the Japanese prison camp in Java weren't as bad as we thought they were"

On the road to Rotterdam, Marie curled up on the back seat and slept. It seemed to me that the tiredness never went out of her face and neither did the cold.

"I knew that I was going to find broken things when I came back to Europe," Pekelharing said "I knew it wouldn't be pleasant to look at, but I didn't expect all the other things I found. In the prison camps in Java and Sumatra, we often thought that Europe would perhaps be a poorer place but a united place. We thought it might even have some new ideas. But all the young people I've met here don't have any ideas or ideals at all. They were most of them too young to know the conditions before the war, but that's all they think they want. After the last war there was a lot of cynicism. There isn't even that now. It's just boredom."

He rambled on without taking his eyes off the road ahead. I felt that he had a lot to say.

"Just before the elections I was job hunting. I went up to Amsterdam to see what I could find. There were all kinds of campaign speeches going on and I noticed that people cheered when one of the Communists spoke. I asked one man, 'Why are you cheering?' He said, 'We've had the Germans—America is the dollar country, she's not interested in us—what do we have to lose by trying Moscow? Can it be worse?' There are some idealists, of course. Schermerhorn was trying to bring about a meeting between the East and the West. He wanted to have a progressive government which would introduce school reforms, some planned economy, nationalization of mines, and other things like that. And he wanted to solve the Indonesian problem much earlier, when it should have been solved. But the mass of the people here don't really bother about the Indonesians. They don't know what it's all about out there. Nobody can unless he's lived there. I don't know myself, except that when I came there I felt that better things should be done for the natives. And when the uprising broke out at the end of the war I felt that maybe it was for the best. But I don't know whether I would have felt the same if my wife had been killed when she was interned by Soekarno's rebels. I was progressive when I reached

the East, but I have to admit that it was difficult to maintain that attitude out there. Everybody felt that he had the 'white man's burden' on his shoulders.

"I came back to Holland six months ago. I thought I would find lots of people to talk to. I thought there might be a lot of discussion, not just about reforms inside of Holland, but about the whole world. About the English, the Americans, and the Russians. But I didn't find it."

We drove through Rotterdam, skirting the edge of the wide field which looked so strange in the center of the city. Again, as the first time I had come down here, it struck me that Rotterdam was busier than Amsterdam. And now it impressed me even more, perhaps because of the contrast which the activity of the city made to the words of Pekelharing.

"I don't know. Do you think the United Nations will do something good? I don't feel that there is any new approach to anything. Everybody says hopefully that maybe there will be a good Germany. I don't see how that can happen. I think the Scheimerhorn group might have had some new ideas. But they weren't strong enough. All the practical people, the important people, were against them." He paused to light a cigarette. "When I was in the Far East I often thought I would go back to Europe and see if I still liked it. I have always loved Europe. There is something about the people, the cities, the old houses, the canals in Amsterdam, that always attracted me. If I stay these things will be one of the main reasons. I have given myself five years. If by April, 1951, there has been no important change in Europe then I shall leave. Where? I don't know. Marie wants to leave right away. She can't stand it here. She is too tired. But I'm reluctant to leave, and I confess again that it's mainly because of the strange attraction. Australians used to ask me why I wanted to go back. I used to tell them that Europe was made up of old slums and dirty cities but that I liked it." He paused. "What kind of changes did you expect in Europe?"

"I don't know. I know that it was rotten before. Everybody used to say that the underground leaders would come out of the war with new ideas, but they didn't. As a matter of fact, as I see it, the only country in the world which could afford to have new ideas, because it was free, was America. But all America does is classify Europe into capitalists and Communists. Well, I don't feel like a capitalist or a Communist, and most of the people I know don't feel that way. Yet it looks as if everybody in Europe is going to have to make a choice between those two because both Russia and America want it that way. There is plenty of room for the something else, though. Maybe in the long run England will have the answer. We certainly don't here in Holland. I know there are people in America who feel the same way, but all we ever hear about is the production, the millionaires, the speeches that your senators make. Our newspapers don't have room for anything else, anyhow. Why don't you send us books and magazines and people to talk to us, instead of corned beef?" He laughed and then drove for a while in silence.

"When you returned did you find your family much changed?" I asked.

He nodded. "My mother survived full of spirit. She has her same old slogan for everything. 'Let's clean our house and forget about the others,' she says all the time. One of my brothers became a schizophrenic and died. He was a good person and the war was too much for him. My oldest brother says he's had enough of Europe. He was a lawyer before the war. Now he wants to leave but he doesn't know where he wants to go. He says, 'The Communists will be in power here some day, and I am a lawyer, so what good will they do me?' My sister was married to a naval officer. He was captured by the Germans and sent to Poland. He never came back. Now she wants to leave Holland, too. The other brother is a businessman. He's very happy. He's pleased with everything. He goes to parties, makes money, and doesn't worry. I wouldn't be surprised if he had

worked with the Germans. Lots of my friends broke up their marriages after the war. 'That's happening everywhere, I suppose." He lapsed into silence.

Marie had wakened once or twice to ask for cigarettes, had smoked quietly and then fallen asleep again.

As we drove past Rotterdam and then Utrecht and over the pleasant roads leading to Arnhem I couldn't help feeling that, like Philip's brother, Holland too was schizophrenic and, if it wasn't careful, might die. For everywhere I looked there was again the well-made-up face of physical reconstruction, a cheerful and promising face, yet the faces of the people and their talk, like Philip's talk, were heavy and hopeless.

Arnhem was a picture of feverish activity. The rubble had been cleared from most of the city. Windowpanes were going into the buildings. Gaping holes in walls were being patched. Stores were open. Temporary houses had been built. Here, if anywhere in Europe, was the picture of reconstruction.

At the edge of the town was a small cemetery. Near it had been built one of the monuments that had begun to spring up again all over Europe with words engraved on it, thanking men for dying. This monument on the bank of the Rhine thanked the First British Airborne Division, which had fallen in the battle of Arnhem in September, 1944. The town hall had issued a brightly colored booklet to tell about the battle, and plans were already drawn up to make the cemetery a park for tourists who would come to see the sights.

The Social Welfare Office of Arnhem was at the back of a barn. About five women, two men, and a youth sat in the overheated waiting room. A young girl kept coming into the room at intervals to feed logs into a small stove. The lady at the desk in the center of the room explained to me in a normal voice that everyone could hear, that these were "political delinquents."

They had recently been released from collaborator camps and were reporting now on routine parole check-ups, or coming to apply for help. They sat around chatting with each other and rising to take their turn as the door of the inner office opened and a pleasant young woman put her head out to call a name.

"There were over a hundred thousand of these collaborators in camps," Van Gelder, the director of the office, explained. "There is no forced labor in the camps. As far as I know there is no organized educational program in the camps either. They just sit around and wait for release. Sometimes, some of them who were serious collaborators were put out on the roads to work. Fifty thousand have already been released. We try to fit them back into the community. We keep them under parole for a certain period of time depending upon what they were guilty of. Each one must report to a supervisor regularly. They receive a relief allotment of about eighteen guilders a week and we try to help them get work and a place to live. We also see that they don't come into contact with Nazis or Bolsheviks. For some reason, I don't know why, there were many collaborators in this Arnhem area and we are having the biggest problem down here trying to get them fitted back into the community. We don't have much trouble with the men. They are docile and polite and they do as we tell them. The women are another matter. They are stubborn and refuse to work in households or sometimes to report to the parole officers. However, they come around when we threaten to send them back to the camps." He was academic about the problem.

A few minutes later he introduced me to one of the women who had just come in. She was a middle-aged woman in a brown fur coat. Her face was ruddy and her hair was a reddish brown. Her name was Louisa Slute and she came from a small town near Arnhem. She replied readily to my questions.

"I was in a camp fifteen months," she said. "Yes, I was a member of the Dutch Nazi party. So were my husband and my son.

My son will be out soon, my husband has another year. I went into the camp in the autumn of 1945 when the court convicted me. No, I do not feel that what I did was wrong. We will see how it turns out. My husband was a manager of a tobacco plantation in Indonesia before the war. He came back here in 1938 and joined the Mussert party then. He was just a member but he was a brilliant man and worked himself up in the party. Later he became financial manager of the Dutch National Socialist Army. He and I believed in National Socialism. No, my son did not know much about it at first, but after a while he also agreed. I never knew anything about concentration camps or death trains. After all, it was war, anyhow, and everybody is bad in war. Yes, most of the people who were in camps with me still think they were right. A few have decided that they were wrong. My husband believed, and I am sure he still believes, that he was doing something good for his country. Germany was the enemy for only five days. After that Holland surrendered, and then Germany was no longer the enemy. No, I did not see any bad things done to the people in my town or in Arnhem. We were separated from them most of the time, I guess, because they didn't like us. I call the people who did not like the Germans, but who worked for them and made a profit, I call them traitors to the country. I felt that the program of National Socialism was good. There are many things in that program which the Dutch should use. Gestapo? Don't the British have a secret service? I will go back to my town, and live by myself. I have some money. I think people will forget in time. I am not going to have anything to do with politics any more. I've had enough of it. I worked all during the war but I have nothing to show for it. My daughter is a nurse in The Hague. She was always an anti-Nazi and what does she have for it now? She used to be very unhappy about us, but now she comes to visit me and I can tell from the way she talks that my husband and I were not so wrong, after all." She smiled and turned to

the parole officer who stamped her card. Then he automatically called out the next name.

Pekelharing and I said nothing as we walked through the town of Arnhem. It was factory closing time and the streets were full. A sign pointed to the cemetery. Pekelharing shrugged. "I guess they're starting a new life in Arnhem. They're putting up two new hotels, and bringing up special bulbs for the park. They're expecting a large tourist trade here."

We picked up Marie at a restaurant where she had been waiting for us. She asked for a cigarette. When she had taken two or three deep puffs, she smiled. "Do we have to return? Why don't we just drive on?"

Philip put an arm around her. "That might be nice."

Five minutes later we headed back toward The Hague.

One Thousand and One

GERMANY

THE BERLINER

- 1 *You're riding one of the finest trains operated by the U S Army in the ETO It leaves Frankfurt South 1715, arrives Wannsee 0843*
- 2 *All pets will be transported in the baggage car for you The attendants will feed and water your pets*
- 3 *Magazines, playing cards, games and small tables are available from the porter .*
- 4 *Contact the porter for any additional service desired Have a pleasant trip!*

THE TRAIN COMMANDER .

THE FRANKFURT-BERLIN TRAIN was unquestionably a fine train The notice I was reading was neatly framed in glass The compartment was birch paneled and clean. The German sign above the window, DO NOT LEAN OUT, was the only reminder that this was a German train requisitioned by the Americans The steward was a U S. Army sergeant and the passengers were American military personnel Southern, mid-western, and eastern accents mingled in the aisles

I closed the door of the compartment, leaned back on the green plush pillow, and closed my eyes I felt mentally ex-

hausted The strain of my first few hours in Germany had been even greater than I had expected. But my fatigue had begun before that. It had begun as I left Paris headed for Frankfurt. I suppose it was the result not only of all I had seen and heard in Europe in the twelve months of 1946, but also of the knowledge that this last country I was to visit was Germany.

This was January, 1947, a year since I had returned to Europe. It was the crisis winter As if it were not enough that food stocks were low, that there were no clothes to buy, and that the coal mines were yielding very little, the weather had dealt Europeans the worst blow in twenty years. As I left Paris three taxi drivers had refused to take me from the Hotel Scribe to the Garde de l'Est one because his motor had frozen, one because he had no more gasoline, and one, it seemed, because he wanted to do nothing but stand inside the door for a while and rub his frozen fingers

Paris had its other troubles too. For two days there had been mild excitement when the old man Leon Blum accepted the premiership and called upon the nation in impassioned French to save itself. "Down 5 per cent" was the slogan, and some stores hung out banner signs announcing that they were going along with the Premier and lowering their prices 5 per cent. However, the newspaper strike was on, the General Transport Workers were threatening to strike, the Viet Nam rebellion had broken out in Indo-China, there was a new split in the interim government, and Frenchmen were about to go to the polls for the eighth time in one year. At the Regence Restaurant in Palais Royale there were fresh raspberries and thick cream for those who could spend one thousand francs or more. On the other side of the Seine a young French photographer treated me to a long loaf of bread and a dish of potatoes in a moist dark room which had not been heated in six years. Mrs. Bergen's room in Oslo a year ago seemed warm by comparison

I knew that it was just as cold in Elsa Kewes's house in Ship-

lake-on-Thames, and according to the papers she was probably getting less coal than she had been getting when I was there the previous January. And what about Motya, the crazed shoeshine boy in front of the Polonia in Warsaw? Had the frost silenced his song about escaping the Ghetto fire? What about Matti in Kuusamo, Finland? His Swedish shoes were worn out by now

Twelve months of peace There was a welter of bleak images to sort out Frayed cuffs and weary queues in England, Paddy the Welshman who still could get no curtains for his daughter Geraldine, bread that crumbled like sawdust in Finland, two French poets eating themselves sick in Stockholm, anti-Hungarian placards in Bratislava, the "liberals" in evening dress in Amsterdam . .

Nearly everywhere I went, some images had repeated themselves Streetcars had bulged with too many passengers People had stooped over railroad tracks or pecked at the ruins of buildings like birds They had hunted wood and coal, bits of string and cloth, nails, wire, cigarettes, old newspapers People had picked things up and fitted them tiredly into a makeshift reconstruction Some talked about clearing away the rubble and building new houses Plans for a model Rotterdam that would outshine the old city had been drawn up and there were paper dreams about Warsaw. People declared, "We don't want the status quo ante, physically or otherwise We want things to be different" Still, they went on patching up windows, hanging doors on half-shattered houses, or digging out shops and homes in the ruins

It seemed to me that people had picked up scraps of ideas that were lying around, too, and had fitted them with weird incoherence into their makeshift world I suppose I had expected to find them banding together against their common troubles, but I had found them fencing themselves off against each other instead Nationalism was more bitter than ever before Minorities were shifting, Mrs Shoenfeld in Prague, and many like her

in Paris, Brussels, and Warsaw, had come home to cold welcomes. Many seemed to have lost their roots and many wanted to leave wherever they were. Philip Pekelharing in Holland had perhaps put his finger on it when he said. "I returned to Europe where my roots were after ten years, but there are no roots here any more. No one knows where he's going or where he wants to go. It's just a case of the first strong wind that comes along."

I suppose that, like so many others, I had expected to find a hard core of honest and enthusiastic leadership among the people in Europe. All during the war we had watched the dramatic activities of the underground. We had thought that they were breeding new leaders who would know what to do once the fighting was over. Margaretha, the young member of the Australia club in Norway, had said the same thing, and so had school teacher Martin in Leeuwarden, and tens of others. But it hadn't worked out that way. They had been too busy fighting to plan. And so automatically they looked abroad for leadership and new directions.

They asked themselves about Russia. But most of the people in Europe that I talked to didn't want that kind of leadership. It was too extreme, it was too one-minded. When they did turn that way it was like the laborers in Amsterdam and some of the workers in Paris that I had talked to who shrugged their shoulders and said "It couldn't be worse than it is anyhow, why not try Moscow?"

They had looked to America, but that had also turned out to be an extreme. Most of them had felt that it would be America that would give them the lead. They had expected us to talk to them humanly, they had sat near their underground radios listening to President Roosevelt during the war. But many said to me, "You're not the Americans we thought you were. You don't seem to talk to us, but over our heads to Russia." Or they said, "Why do you try to force us to say what side of the fence we're on? Why do you force us to make a choice?"

America was not isolationist in the old sense, she was taking part in all the major conferences and this had been a year of many big ones. Following the first meeting of the UN Assembly in London, there had been Lake Success in New York and then two Paris conferences, a food conference, innumerable international committee meetings on aeronautics, reparations, refugees, and a dozen other subjects. It had been the year of the Nuremberg Trials and the hanging of collaborators in a dozen countries. It had been the year of UNRRA's final efforts, the year of the underground exodus to Palestine, the year of detention camps on Cyprus.

Many decisions had been made this year. Treaties had been signed with the German satellites, the issue of Trieste had been settled. But most of Europe still floundered about in limbo.

There were some hopeful signs. Some countries were trying to lift themselves by the bootstraps. Professor Huntley in Great Cumberland Place had warmed me with his talk about the British experiment. Bjorn Hoel, climbing the mountain outside of Oslo, had had firm confidence in the future, and Zdenka in Prague had had direction. Weren't these the people who counted? After all, there was no black market in England, none in Norway, none in Czechoslovakia. Wasn't that a healthy sign? These were the three countries which had something of a plan—and so far they had been able to keep a balance and stay away from one extreme or the other. Professor Huntley, Bjorn, and Zdenka all had declared that they knew things had been no good before the war and needed changing. Their governments had assumed the responsibility for a change and were carrying it out gradually to fit the needs of their people. Perhaps if they succeeded they could pull Europe out of its limbo?

I had taken with me from Prague a copy of a statement President Benes had made in October, 1945. He had said "There is no doubt that under the influence of war all Europe is politically and economically changing. There simply is, on the continent

of Europe, a transition to a system in which the socialist elements will have considerable weight or even preponderance. This can be seen also in Czechoslovakia. Perhaps in our case there is a difference because we are one of those states which are mature enough and whose citizens are sufficiently enlightened so that they do not need to be forced into any socialistic measures by strikes, revolts, and conflicts, or even by civil war, but who try to avoid all this by a wise and progressive policy, socially progressive but democratically honest, open, clear. . . . We have had the courage to start this progressive socialist policy and we are fully aware of this responsibility. The French rightly say, '*Gouverner c'est prévoir*' [To govern is to foresee], and that is what we are doing. . . ." Very little of what I had seen in Europe was this hopeful. And now I was in Germany.

There was no question in my mind as to how I felt about the Germans. Way back somewhere in the now dim past there had been doubts. Not every German had been responsible for the deafness of Dr. Merzbacher whose eardrums had been broken when he was beaten on the street in Stuttgart in 1934. In those days it had been the German people who were being occupied by the Nazis, over a million had been in concentration camps then. But by 1936 when I visited Hamburg there was no telling who were the occupiers or who was being occupied. There had been a swastika in Kate Busche's window although Heins had always been a Social Democrat. Doctor Franz Neumann had divorced his non-Aryan wife and had gone to live alone in the outskirts, his daughter unable to join the BDM (Nazi girl organization) because of her mixed blood. There had been little talk about anything but the new roads, and the fine new plan the Fuehrer had for newly married couples, and the baby carriages the government was going to provide. It had all been strange and painful.

The few who believed that there was hope for Germany and that the underground would arise had gone to Spain and Paris

and Lisbon and London and New York After Munich they had also given up, as reports of atrocities reached the outside world. There had been little hope left in Albert, a German writer in New York, who had hungrily watched the newspapers for every sign of anti-Hitler activity and found none Instead, he had read report after report of the Wehrmacht's victories in the West and of the new concentration camps in every country on the Continent.

The thousand years which had begun in 1933 were well on their way in 1939, 1940, 1941 Reports of the worst Nazi concentration camp in Poland had reached a small Polish labor group exiled in New York Smuggled out in a shosole, these reports told of gas chambers, of electric trains connecting the death houses with the camp, of dazed people asking the way to the "estate of Tremblinka" where they were supposed to work Himmler's order for extermination of the Jews had been broadcast to the world, and the underground tales of horror mounted as the war went on Then there had been the liberating armies and the first eyewitness accounts of Buchenwald and Belsen-Bergen

Yet in all those years, up through 1945, these had all been intellectual concepts I had hated Germany, but it had been impersonal Now in 1947 every shadow of a doubt was removed. I had seen dozens of Mrs Lauers, I had seen the Pankrac prison in Prague with its death hall built like a modern bathroom, where hundreds of Czech youths had been guillotined monthly, I had seen the bone-chopping machine in Krakow, which had made fine fertilizers, I had seen the faces of the Lidice women; and the order of the Commandant of Kladno instructing the bank of Lidice to transfer the accounts of the killed men to the Reichsbank in Berlin. I had seen the white dust hanging over the Warsaw Ghetto I had spoken to a friend in London who said "One hundred relatives of mine and my wife's were killed" I had found many people I knew in Europe and had written

about them, but there were dozens I couldn't find and write about.

We had pulled into the Frankfurt station at six in the morning. As we stepped out onto the wide open-air platform, a blast of freezing wind swept a flurry of snow into our faces. A young boy, wearing a torn sweater and army trousers, picked up my bag. "You are going to the RTO?" he asked in English. I nodded "Follow me, please." He walked off with a vigorous step. I noticed other boys, most of them without gloves or even sweaters, all of them German, carrying bags, Val-Packs, and here and there a small footlocker, down the steps to the outer waiting room. Near the checkroom a group of them stood together showing off the cigarettes they had received as tips. For the rest, the station was U. S. Army. Privates and sergeants manned all the windows, American magazines filled a rack near the information booth, a loudspeaker bellowed train schedules in a southern accent, a couple of WAC's waited their turn to get into the phone booth. Outside, as we lifted our bags into a frail-looking bus, three German children jumped up and down in the snow crying, "Zigarette? Zigarette? Zigarette?" Their shoes were ripped at the toes and the holes had been stuffed with newspaper.

As the bus rolled through the city, there was little to see but skeleton ruins. There were no Germans on the streets. The River Main was covered with a sheet of solid ice. We passed a block of partially destroyed apartment buildings which were sectioned off by thick tangles of barbed wire. Then the bus stopped, an MP pushed his way through looking at our identity cards, and in a moment we were on our way again for another short distance. This was the Compound, USFET-Headquarters of U. S. Forces in the European Theater.

I stepped to the ground and looked up at a group of clean, yellow-brick buildings. They looked as if they had been built

within the year. Neat paths were laid out in the snow leading to the spacious front doors. In a broad parking space stood a row of military sedans and next to them three or four shiny blue and deep-maroon Buicks. The I.G. Farbenindustrie had once been housed here, now the Americans had taken the buildings over intact—they had never been scratched by bombing.

Inside there were rows of offices, closed for the day because it was Sunday. Colored posters calling for more enlistments in the army brightened the expansive marble lobby. At the head of the short flight of marble steps, glass doors opened into a huge glass-enclosed rotunda overlooking a large and well-laid-out courtyard. This was the soda fountain. Down one side ran a long counter, studded by familiar crimson Coca-Cola coolers. Most of the small round tables in the room were taken by GI's or American civilian employees having coffee and doughnuts or ice-cream sodas. It was a piece of America transplanted. There was no way of knowing that this was Germany.

When I sat down, however, I caught sight of a group of three girls in pink waitress uniforms. They were talking and giggling. I tried to listen. They spoke German and the conversation was about boys. I don't know why, but for some reason I had not expected to find them looking or talking like this. They were robust, their cheeks were pink, their hair was curled, there was an air of carefreeness about them. They looked exactly the way I remembered German girls their age before the war. And with the typical German girl's love for tinkets, they stood there now fingering thin chain bracelets, pins on their collars, and lockets. Apparently the German *fraulein* had not lost what she called her *Schmuck*, and knowing her mentality I guessed how happy it made her. There was no trace of war or bombings on any of them. Certainly no trace of the complete destruction and defeat their country had suffered. They looked well kept and well fed. I wondered how they felt serving the occupier. They didn't seem to mind. They walked about cheerfully, carrying

trays with chocolate-fudge sundaes and good-smelling coffee. They kidded with the GI's the way any waitress in an ice-cream parlor in Stamford, Connecticut, would. I wondered how they lived in defeat and what they thought, but I couldn't tell from the scraps of conversations I picked up. They were girls talking about their Saturday night dates. One of them was telling of the cake she had had in the country the week before.

I walked back through the wide hall to the visitors' bureau, a well-furnished room with magazines and books and a soft carpet. I called Berlin on the military telephone and was connected in a second. I realized that in the I G Farben building I was in a world apart. This colony had nothing to do with Germany. I wondered how many of the men and officers and stenographers and civilian employees ever spoke to a German. They lived in American quarters, ate American food in well-appointed mess halls, saw American movies, and attended lectures and dances in the officers' clubs. It was all there on the bulletin board in front of me. There was a dinner dance at the Casino this evening and a movie in the Palace Theater and other entertainment at the Red Cross Club.

I left the compound and walked through the wide streets of the city which were lined with the shells of buildings. A few MP's and a jeep here and there were the only signs of activity. I had to get back to the South Station to catch the train for Berlin but I had a few more hours to spend so I decided to take a walk. The sameness of every street was familiar by now. It was like parts of Warsaw. rubble, ruins, children picking up cigarette butts in the streets. The cold kept most of the inhabitants of Frankfurt indoors, apparently. I wondered where they lived. Most of the buildings standing had large American signs indicating that they were the property of Military Government—transient mess halls, libraries, or offices. The center of the city was wiped out, the opera was an ugly skeleton.

The main station was gutted but there were people around it

so I went in. The waiting room was crowded, and a sickly smell permeated the cold air. At first I couldn't believe that this was Germany. I remembered the neatness, the cleanliness and order. The strange assortment of people at this station now was worse than the platform in Katowice. Men, women, children, pushed each other and carried the strangest looking packages, bedding, worn out suitcases, shopping bags, rucksacks, baskets. They looked as if they had been sitting there for hours, some, perhaps, for days.

At first I thought that these were DP's from one of the neighboring camps being transported to another camp, but as I listened to the conversations I realized they were Germans trying to get to Berlin across the "*Gruene Grenze*"—the new expression for the illegal border. Anytime a German wanted to get from the American zone into the Russian zone he had to do it illegally and Frankfurt, apparently, was a main stopover. There was no room on any of the benches. I found a small space by the window where I could stand and watch the crowd, perhaps pick up some of the conversation.

There were several kinds of people. There were women in city clothes, their fur coats looking warm and rather new, I noticed their footwear, it was better than any I had seen in the rest of Europe. There were some well-dressed men in woolen coats. They were probably going to Berlin on business. Then there were the farmers. It was obvious by their dress and talk. They were carrying food into the capital and hoping to collect high prices on the black market. The third group was made up of types I had never seen before but which I was to encounter at every station in Germany during my visit. They were what the Germans called their own "displaced persons"—former members of the SS, released Nazis, criminals, *schiebers*, and black-marketeers. They were mostly youths with greasy long black hair. They milled around the crowd, whispering about the next train connections and collecting money from the women and

the falliners. They had American cigarettes and sold them at the equivalent of a dollar apiece. They were dirty and there was a doped look about them. They apparently made their living on these railroad stations. I heard one of them talk to a plump woman carrying a child in her arms. "For three thousand marks you can get a room in Christstrasse, it will be arranged. Now give me the money and forget about it." She tried to argue but he spat and walked off.

The heat radiating from hundreds of bodies pressed tightly against each other warmed the station, but the odor was too much for me to take. I changed my observation post for another nearer the door and listened to a group of three talk. They were discussing conditions. The woman wore a kerchief and her eyes were red rimmed, but her cheeks were plump. "Now, imagine, last week the fat ration was three days late. We all said, 'Let them tell us whatever they want but that sort of thing could certainly never happen in Adolf's times. . . .'" She shrugged her shoulders and the men nodded. I moved closer to hear the rest of the conversation. "I understand that *der Russe* [the Russian] is cutting down the potato ration in his zone. It's probably better here. *Der Amm* is bad enough, but at least one can laugh at him." The others laughed and nodded. The woman continued. "I don't much feel like laughing at him any more. *Der Amm* is taking away just as much as *der Russe*." I gathered that *der Amm* was the American. "Now, my dear Frau Heinecke, why talk about it? It can't be changed. They are all taking from us now, but it won't go on forever. Let's wait and see." The man who spoke had glassy eyes and a clean-shaven face. He was twisting a gold chain on his stomach. The other one chuckled. "*Demokratie*!" "Ja, ja," said the woman, and shook her head.

It was late and I had to get to the South Station at the other end of town. I wondered what these three had done during the war. Had they been members of the party? Most probably. The woman looked like a staunch supporter of Adolf. If I were to

ask her, she probably would turn her watery eyes at me and say smilingly. "You know how it was. We were forced to join the party, but we were always unpolitical. After all, I am just a little woman, what do I know about politics?" My brother, who had been an interrogator with the American Intelligence during the war, had told me of hundreds of "little men" and "little women" who had never known what politics meant but who had faithfully served in the Volksturm, or hidden a prominent member of the SS in their cellar for months after the Allied occupation.

Outside the Bahnhof I got on a German streetcar. It was boarded up and dark. I couldn't see the faces of the passengers. It was too cold to move around, but I was aware that they were staring at me. Perhaps they had seen the American flag in my lapel, or was the cut of my coat that obvious? In any case, the conductor knew I was an American and didn't ask for my ticket. I looked again at the footwear of the passengers and was struck by the decent condition of most of the shoes. These were still the fruits of the short-lived days of victory when the Wehrmacht had looted the Continent and every country in Europe had worked for the Third Reich. It was paradoxical, though, to see most of them so much better dressed than the Norwegians, the Dutch, the French, the Belgians, the Czechs, or the Poles.

I asked the conductor where to get off. He stared at me for a second and I wondered whether it was unusual for an American to ride a German streetcar. Then he smiled and explained carefully. I would like to have talked to him but it was too crowded. What was he thinking? Who was he? Did he realize what Germany had done? As I was about to get off he pushed himself through the crowd and asked softly, "Fraulein, could you please give me a cigarette?" I was startled at first and then reached into my purse only to find that I didn't have a single cigarette left. I felt genuinely sorry as I looked up and saw his

eager look, and as if to prove my words I showed him the empty package.

As I left the streetcar I remembered his strange, meek, hungry eyes. And for some reason, no matter how hard I tried to remember where I was and what I had seen before I got here, I wished that I had had the cigarette he wanted. This was the beginning of a confusion about Germany which was to remain with me all through my stay in that country, and which added now to my weariness on the "Berliner."

I decided a good American meal would help and went to the diner, which was clean and well appointed. The sergeant collected my twenty-five cents in scrip money and handed me a menu. A good-looking colonel and his well-dressed wife and child sat at the next table. The boy wore colonel's leaves on his shoulders. The father was explaining to him why it took so much longer to get from Frankfurt to Berlin than it should. We had to circle the Soviet zone. The boy listened intently. His name was Buster, and the father was proud of his good behavior and interest. The aroma of fresh American coffee spread through the car. I remembered the girl who had spoken to Lenny Bernstein at the DP camp in Czechoslovakia. She had said she was going to America—not the America he knew but to German America.

"*Onkel Tom's Huette*" was a block of flats of which Berliners had once been proud. It had been built on the Swedish model for families of low income. I remembered when the flats were first built. Many an American visitor to Germany in the late twenties used to inspect this model housing project as part of his tour of the city. The flats consisted mostly of two rooms and a kitchen. They were clean and had all the necessary equipment, including good plumbing. They looked like match boxes and had tiny yards in front of them.

This section had been damaged little and the flats were now

part of the American colony. Military Government had taken over the entire section for civilian personnel and low-ranking officers. The cinema and stores now housed the commissary, the PX, and a movie theater for U. S. personnel only. There was a subway station just under the stores and buildings, and OMGUS (Office of Military Government U. S.) was only one stop away.

I was assigned one of the apartments in *Onkel Tom's Huetten*. It was drab but clean and warm. Whatever furniture was in it was German and rather ugly. Sentimental pictures hung in the living room and on the bedroom walls embroidered rhymes glorified the family and "*die Mutter*" Things I remembered so well about pre-Hitler Germany, and which were so hard to fit into the years that followed.

A small woman in a worn-out black sweater and kerchief greeted me. "*Guten Tag, gnädige Frau Ich bin Frau Kaiser.*" She went on to explain that she came with the apartment. She would clean and wash, and cook if necessary. She took my bags into the bedroom and put them on the bed. She asked whether she could unpack them and I nodded. It was the first encounter with a German alone. I wanted to talk to her, and yet I didn't know how to start. She didn't wait for me to begin, however, but started asking questions. "How long have you been in Berlin?" When I told her that I had just arrived she sighed. "Well, you didn't see anything yet. These are times one is better off not living through. Ja, ja, we lived to see enough."

She looked strangely familiar. Or was she just a composite picture of many a German Frau Kaiser I had known in the past? The shiny, scrubbed, red face and the stringy, brownish hair tied on top of her head, the very watery eyes, the thin, twisted mouth and the heavy bosom, the oxfords with strange pointed toes and narrow little heels that American women had worn in the twenties—she looked like the baker's wife in Zoppot, like Frau Tanner who used to clean our apartment in Charlottenburg many years ago. She talked the same way, it was "*Berlin-*

enisch," I recognized it instantly. She pronounced her g's as j's and rolled her words together.

She went on to tell me about the misery of the German people. She was clean and efficient, though. While she talked she hung up all my clothes and put the underwear into the drawers. I just listened, hoping she would tell me about herself. Who was she? What had she done since 1933? Those were questions I wanted to ask every German I met. But there was no need to ask. She volunteered the information.

"Ja, ja, gn. Frau, we've asked it on ourselves. I always knew that man was up to no good. My old father and mother wouldn't speak to me. I was almost an outcast, but I always said, 'You can have your Fuehrer, you'll remember him well.'"

"Didn't you have to join the party?"

"No. I never did. The last time I voted was in 1932 for the SDP [Social Democrats]—since then I've stayed out of politics. I am a widow and I had two boys. I had to work hard all my life to support them. I had no time for politics. And when they all started with the Fuehrer business I didn't see what he did for me. The taxes were higher, the food more expensive, you couldn't buy anything. I don't know what they saw in that man. And now they can all see for themselves."

"How about your children?" I asked.

She turned from the dresser and her eyes filled with tears. I remembered how easily German women always cried. "My oldest boy was on the Eastern front . . . he is no more. I knew it would end like this. The younger one is with the Russian in Dresden. He's healthy and has a family."

I didn't know what to say. Was Frau Kaiser sincere? Was she talking the way she did because I was the conqueror and she had learned her lesson well? How was one to know? She continued. "My old parents still believe in him. Mutter is eighty years old and Vater nearing ninety and they say the generals betrayed the Fuehrer. You have no idea, gn. Frau, how this man

duped and blinded our people. My parents were nice old people before it all started. I still don't talk to them. I blame them for the death of my boy because I begged him not to go into the Wehrmacht but Vater and all made him. Na ja, gn Frau, what is there to talk about?" she waved her hand.

There was a knock on the door and she ran to open it. Her voice was sharper, it seemed to me, as I heard her talking to someone outside. "Why didn't you come sooner?" she was saying. "Now it will take most of the afternoon to warm up."

A man's high-pitched Prussian accent answered, "All right, all right."

I went out to see who it was. In the door to the kitchen stood a man about five feet tall. He wore a gray turtle-neck sweater and high black boots. He had a pointed nose and a mustache, and his eyes were a piercing blue. He spoke in a staccato.

"Gn Frau, I am the Feuermann. My name is Willie Schmidt. I will keep the oven going for you. Do you like it very warm?"

"Not too warm."

"Right." He clicked his heels and went about cleaning the ashes out of the pot-bellied stove which was the central heater for the entire flat. His movements, like his speech, were jerky and fast. Frau Kaiser watched him out of the corner of her eye and then left. I looked around the kitchen and found pots and pans and a few dishes supplied by the army.

Willie Schmidt turned from the stove and smiled. There was that sweet quality to his smile which again reminded me of somebody, I didn't know who. After a while he said, "You hate us, don't you?" I didn't answer and he continued, "You should. The whole world hates Germany today and we must win our way back into society. I think we can do it because we are hard workers. Take me. My job is to keep the fire going. If I do it well that is the answer to the German problem. You come here hating us, but then you see that there is a Willie Schmidt, he is a German but he works hard and he's a good man, and you

begin to change your opinion. If the streetcleaner does the same, and the tailor and the grocer, gradually you Americans will see that there are good Germans. That's the only solution to our misery, gn Frau." He turned to his fire again and poked at the coals vigorously.

I walked out into the living room. What Willie Schmidt was saying was impressive and if that was indeed the attitude of the man-in-the-street, fine. But I couldn't help feeling that it was just a little speech he had learned.

An OMGUS jeep picked me up at my flat. I was to meet Albert, an old friend, a well-known anti-Nazi writer who had spent the past fourteen years in exile and had recently returned from America to be a German once again. "I decided to come back," he had told me when I saw him the first time, "because if Germans like me don't come back then there is no hope at all." I was to pick him up at a friend's flat in Zehlendorf and we were to visit a group of German writers in the Soviet sector.

The jeep was boarded in but the sub-zero cold gripped my legs. We turned off Wilsky Strasse and passed the American shopping center. A dozen cars, jeeps, army buses and weapons carriers were crowded together, their German drivers clustered around them stamping their feet and blowing at their fists to keep warm. Here and there the wife of an American officer or War Department employee, usually in slacks and a heavy coat, followed a man who dragged a box of groceries on a little wagon toward a car.

On Argentinische Allee we passed a few bombed buildings and a cleared field dotted with red wooden huts. At the end of the road, just opposite Truman Hall, the American officers' mess, there were two Quonset huts and between them a row of benches. It was lunch time and the German employees of OMGUS were lining up with their trays and tin dishes to receive the one warm meal to which their job with the Office of

Military Government entitled them. They stood shivering in the open waiting for a cup of soup, a dish of stew or fish, some potatoes and two slices of bread—to a German in Germany today, a magnificent meal.

As I sped by them in the jeep, the feeling I had had now for several days repeated itself. They were living in a different world, a world that hung just on the fringes of the American world. They didn't seem to belong here in the midst of these lovely buildings and walks which were OMGUS.

My contact with Germans so far had been slight. There were one or two girls whom I saw at the office, there were Frau Kaiser, Willie Schmidt, the driver of the jeep, and the few kids who begged for cigarettes outside of Truman Hall. That was all. They seemed to act like people who belonged on the fringes. They gave you the same smiles, accepted the coffee, sugar, or cigarettes with the same humility and were always ready to serve. If you happened to catch them off guard, however, the smile was not there, nor was the humility. They whispered about *der Russe* and *der Ami* among themselves, they told each other fantastic stories of how there was no food in Germany because it all went to the American Commissaries. Sometimes they were openly hostile. My second day in Berlin I asked the subway guard which train to take to OMGUS, which was just one stop away. He sent me in the opposite direction, about twenty minutes out of the way.

We passed OMGUS. The white stone and stucco buildings, looking clean and bright in the snow, were spread over a wide area and gave the impression of a college campus. I couldn't remember having seen them before the war and I was told that they had been part of Goering's Luftwaffe Empire. Now they were the nerve center of the American occupation of Germany. Thousands of Americans and German civilians worked in scores of branches of military governments which were housed here.

Not far down the road stood the famous barter market where

German civilians brought their fur coats, furniture, lamps, silverware, and china and traded them off to Americans for cigarettes. It was a legal exchange set up by American authorities in an effort to combat the black market. A sign hung out on the wooden fence announcing that the market was closed because of the cold weather and lack of fuel.

Just beyond OMGUS lay Dahlem, once the residential section of well-to-do Berliners. Rich foreigners and diplomats also had lived here. Many of the luxurious villas were now boarded up, some bombed, others hit in the fighting. Those still intact had been taken over by the occupiers. I remembered the villa of Johan Kreitner, a business acquaintance of my family's, with whom we had once spent a Sunday. He had shown off his collection of miniature snuff bottles which had filled a row of cabinets along the whole wall of a huge room. He had talked at length about German *Wohnungskultur* when one of us admired the modern furniture of the terrace. He had said that there were few countries which could compete with Germany in interior decoration. I remembered how he fingered the hand-painted cloth of the couch and looked up with pride. "*Wir Deutschen wissen was gut ist . . .*" he had said. The villa was now taken over by an American colonel. No one knew what had happened to the Kreitners.

Albert was standing outside his house on Argentinische Allee waiting for me. There was *Strom Sperre*—electricity cut—he explained, and since I wouldn't have been able to ring the bell he had waited outside. As usual he accompanied his words with odd gestures. He had a habit of chopping the air in front of him, and it always seemed to me, perhaps because of his methodical speech, that he was tracing categories before him. He was thin and stoop-shouldered. The skin was tightly drawn on both his hands and face. His forehead was bony, his hair thin. He threw his arms around me as he always did as if to re-express the excitement and pleasure he felt at meeting an old friend in

what he called "this wasteland." We crowded into the jeep and headed downtown.

By definition of the United States Department of State, Albert was a "premature and excessive anti-fascist." He had fought Hitler since the middle twenties. He had been one of the contributors to the *Weltbuehne*, the famous leftist periodical edited by Von Ossietzky who later won the Nobel Peace Prize while in a German concentration camp. He had left his country the day the "Thousand-Year Reich" began and had sworn he would return when the thousand years were over. During those thousand years he had joined his fellow exiles in Paris where he had established the Committee for Burned Books. Later he had fought in the International Brigade in Spain, spent some time in a concentration camp in France at the beginning of the war, and had finally come to the United States where he had spent the war years analyzing and debunking the Goebbels propaganda. When the war was over the Department of State had excused his premature anti-fascism and expressed its willingness to grant him American citizenship. But he felt that it was his duty to return to Germany as soon as possible as a German, live there on German rations, and see what he could do to help remake the German mind. As he remarked to a representative of the State Department, not only was he a premature and excessive anti-fascist but also an unconverted one.

He had been back now for a little less than a month. "Return was strange," he had told me. "Fourteen years is a long time. I knew over there in America during the last five and a half years what I would find. I had no illusions about my fellow countrymen. As I wrote in my letter of farewell to America in the *German-American* in New York, I expected the worst—and I found it. When I returned I thought I would be a complete stranger, that my language would not even be understood, and that this would make my job of finding out what they think over here even more difficult. This wasn't so, however. I found

that they understand my language, and I understand their slang. None of them suspect that I've been away. They open up immediately. In speech, it was as if I had never left

"But when we arrived at Bremerhaven I learned fast what it meant to be a German in Germany. We were put up at a pitch dark bunker lined with wooden boards for sleeping. Refugees from the East, deportees, derelicts, old women waiting for a boat were all there in the sub-zero temperature. They gave up a few army blankets and a piece of black bread. It was quite a contrast with my Finchley coat and the memory of the orange juice and steak we had had on board ship twelve hours earlier. It was so cold in the bunker that we couldn't move our fingers to light a cigarette. As my wife put the blanket over her head and chewed on the piece of bread she looked up and said, 'Albert, it seems we're always premature. We were premature anti-fascists, and now we're premature returnees.'

"As you know, I am a Berliner, so the first thing in the morning I went to the railroad station and asked the girl for two tickets to Berlin. She looked at me quizzically and exclaimed, 'What lunatic asylum did you just escape from?' A little detail that none of us knew is that although Germans are supposedly allowed to travel freely from city to city within the various zones, Berlin is a particular exception. It is a four-sector city and in order to get to it one needs special military permits from one of the sectors. I asked the young lady at the ticket office what to do and she went on for about ten minutes telling me about twelve different applications and seven other documents. If I was lucky I could perhaps get a permit within eight or nine months. We stayed in the bunker until I learned about the *Gruene Grenze* and made the trip to Berlin illegally. That's where you see Germany today, on a trip like that." I remembered the people at the Frankfurt station. "It took us three days and three nights. There were about fifty of us in tiny, boarded-up compartments, standing against each other, keeping warm

I wouldn't have missed the trip for anything. There for the first time I came into contact again with German thinking. They spoke freely because they were sure that there was no one watching them, since only Germans travel *Gruen*.

"As I said before, I was prepared to find Nazi ideology alive, and it is. But there is one cheering thing, there is no Hitler myth, something I feared most of all. Very little talk of Hitler's being alive, or a saint, or anything like that. Mainly it is about the good old times, and the hatred of the occupiers. On that trip I took part in a vivid discussion about how *der Russe* brings in vodka to get all the people drunk and then spirits them off, about the rapes and the atrocities, about the hunger that *der Ami* imposes on the poor women and children. I asked them why it was so, and the answer was 'betrayal'. None of them during the entire trip had said that Germany was guilty, that the people deserved punishment. When I asked about concentration camps and atrocities there was an outburst of laughter. 'There is a man who believes all that *quatsch*. Do you believe that we would have lost the war if some of the generals hadn't been duped by these stories? The only thing we did wrong was to lose the war. You wouldn't be talking this way if we had won. I wonder whether you believed any of that nonsense when our Wehrmacht was victorious?' Then they talked more about food. Their main occupation seems to be black-marketeering and getting food and cigarettes to the cities from the country. Nobody thinks of work, it doesn't pay. And they all seem to concentrate on making it tough for *der Ami* and *der Russe*. They talked about the stolen watches, and the stolen shirts, and the looting by all three occupiers. As far as I could detect there was no other emotion in them but hatred. Most of them sort of hinted that it won't last long, however, because *der Ami* and *der Russe* will soon be at each other's necks. In the meantime Germany must suffer, just as Goebbels predicted. Then there were sighs about the good old days when there was

food. So there was bombing, but at least a man could have a beer and a meal, and there were no troops in the country. It was almost a chorus of '*Damals, Damals, war es doch besser*' [In those days, it was better]."

I had heard the same thing with variations ever since I first encountered the Germans at Frankfurt. But Albert's reporting it was doubly interesting to me. He was not just a foreigner who had lived in Germany, but a German watching his people.

We passed another pile of rubble. A large sign said in three languages YOU ARE NOW LEAVING THE AMERICAN SECTOR A few feet ahead another sign announced. YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE BRITISH SECTOR. Albert's face was stern as he looked out on the ruins I had been through this section before and had seen the block after block of blackened, gutted buildings. There was hardly anything I could recognize.

We were now approaching the Kurfuerstendamm, which had been the center of café life and shopping, the parade ground on which the nouveau riche, the boulevardiers, and the starchy middle class of prewar Berlin had rubbed elbows with artists, prostitutes, and pimps. It had not been uncommon to see a young dandy with a knotted scarf and his hat at a jaunty angle step up to a befurred young woman who was clicking along on very high heels and murmur, "*Fraulein, eine Tasse Kaffee?*" If she was a "*Berlinerin*" she might shrug and go along with him, or turn her cold eyes on him and snicker, "*Vorher oder nachher?*" (Before or after?), hoist her fur and walk off.

This had been the section of the mad night life of the twenties which had carried over into the early thirties in Berlin. Here, it seemed, had been concentrated all the bitterness, hopelessness and sham of disillusioned Berlin—the Berlin of the 1918 Revolution, the Berlin of the inflation, the Berlin of the wobbly Weimar Republic, the Berlin of the thousands of unemployed, the Red Flag demonstrations, the street fights between Social Democrats and Communists, the Berlin which was just begin-

ning to be the scene of smashed store windows and the scrawled JUDE, the Berlin of intense intellectualism, where Hans Fallada, Erich Kastner, Hausmann and others wrote books which were so aptly described by Sternheim as the "*juste milieu*" literature, whose mediocrity made for saleability in the tens of thousands—a literature which, like the Kurfuerstendamm itself, gave Berliners, not an escape from decadence, but a chance to immerse themselves in it.

I turned to Albert. His face was hard as he looked out on the ruins of the Gedachtniskirche. The Tauentzienstrasse as far as the Wittenbergplatz lay in ruins. There were some skeletons of cafés left

"How does all this strike you, Albert?" I asked

He smiled slowly "I know you always used to hate this part of Berlin, you told me in New York. But for me it had something. I spent my youth here in this atmosphere And ask any Berliner, he loved it" He looked out again "Right here was the Café am Zoo. I spent many an afternoon and evening arguing, writing, and thinking here. And the Romanisches Café, where the bohemians gathered. They weren't all bad then. There was good talk, and so much hope in the early days . . ." He shrugged. "But, frankly, it gives me no emotion now. These are just dead buildings I don't feel that I know any of these people, and I don't feel that this city was ever my home Maybe it's because I know how much went on here that never was a part of me in the past fourteen years."

We drove on in silence through more shattered streets toward the impressive Charlottenburger Chaussee which led into Unter den Linden The ruins were impressive The Tiergarten, which had once been the showplace of the city with its wonderful gardens and trees, had not a single tree in it, just a few bunkers, remnants of tanks, and grotesque rows of headless statues Opposite it stood a clean, new monument commemorating the Red Army The lopsided dome of the Reichstag shell

loomed up on the left As we passed under the Brandenburger Tor into Unter den Linden, I looked back through the small window of the jeep and saw the victory horses at the top of the gate prancing at a crazy angle

We stopped in front of the Adlon Hotel and got out to take a brief walk We stood on the sidewalk for a moment looking down the wide street There was nothing familiar here This might have been a photograph of destruction for all its lifelessness A small sign at the Adlon said that downstairs in the basement the café was open Wilhelmstrasse had a new street sign giving the name in English and Russian As we walked along a group of people came toward us There were about ten of them They turned their heads from side to side like sight-seers As they walked by I heard Russian I caught the words of a Soviet officer who was obviously guiding the rest of the party. "And this is the famous Adlon Hotel" The women in plain clothes looked up curiously and nodded their heads One of them kept repeating, "It is really destroyed, all of it, badly destroyed, ah, ah"

"This is the Soviet sector, would you like to go into the Russian bookstore?" Albert asked as we crossed the street

It seemed to me the store was the only occupied building on Unter den Linden Red Army soldiers and officers browsed among Russian- and German-language books, listened to records or shuffled colored pictures of Stalin or of mothers cradling babies in their arms Two soldiers discussed seriously the problem of buying a large lithograph showing a flock of sheep for their barracks room At a glass case a Red Army major was arguing vociferously with the German woman attendant who could not understand his Russian

I stepped up to see if I could help He turned a dark strong face toward me and nodded vigorously to my question "I am trying to explain to her I need a German-Russian learner for my son, and she does not understand Tell her, please, lady, that the

major wants a German-Russian learner. She must have them because it says in our newspaper that they were brought in from Moscow this week. The boy needs it now for school."

The attendant stood in surly silence waiting for my translation. When I told her what the major wanted, she replied impatiently, "I told him we haven't got it." Then she added, "*Ich kann nichts dafuer*" (I can't help it).

I repeated her words and the major munched his lips in anger. In the meantime I asked the saleswoman to show me some Russian books. She had surprisingly few. There was a copy of Simonov's poetry, a few editions of Sholokhov. The rest were German editions of Russian authors. I saw the works of Gorki in German and asked whether she had them in Russian. She shook her head. The major looked up at me and spoke sternly. "Lady, it is a fine writer. Fine books by Gorki. Buy them." I explained that I knew them and admired Gorki greatly but wanted to read him in Russian. He shook his head. "Buy them just the same, he is worth reading in any language, even German, if you know it." He saluted curtly and walked out.

It struck me that the soldiers were shy and spoke in careful whispers. The German attendants, on the contrary, were harsh and in no case seemed to make the effort to be helpful. I had the same feeling as at the concert in Helsinki—that these Russians were following the rules of a little book, this time "How to Behave in Berlin." Their behavior was apparently dictated by the posters I had already noticed in the Soviet sector. They were signed by Joseph Stalin and assured the German people that the Soviet allies were not going to harm them, but liberate them and educate them to democracy. As Albert and I left I heard the saleswoman curse under her breath, "*Verflucht*," as she stacked up piles of the *New Times* in three languages.

In the car, Albert shook his head. We turned down past the destroyed massive buildings of the Wilhelmstrasse, buildings which had spelled fear and doom for so long to people the

world over. Blocks of granite and heaps of rubble lay strewn at the edge of the sidewalks. We passed the Chancellory where Hitler had died and the remains of the Ministry of Propaganda where Goebbels had hobbled about. There were few people in sight except for a couple of black-marketeers offering cigarettes to some sightseers, and selling photographs of the Chancellory and chips of marble from the columns and desks inside as souvenirs. They were in rags and their toes stuck out of their shoes. We passed a German soldier, hobbling along painfully in the snow. He was missing one arm and dragged one foot after him. He wore no hat, he was not shaven, his uniform was tattered. He had once been a member of the *Herrenvolk*. I wondered what countries he had sent souvenirs from. I hung a mental sign around his neck: "FUEHRER WIR DANKEN DIR . . ."

Albert continued to shake his head. "*Diese Idioten, was fuer Idioten . . .*"

Peter had been a nonpolitical poet before the Hitler regime. He was slight and pale and wore his brown hair back from his sloping forehead. If anyone had been an ivory-tower intellectual it was he. Now he was one of the literary directors of the *Berliner Rundfunk* (the Berlin radio) in the Soviet sector.

In the early days of Hitlerism, he had continued to write his poetry until the Goebbels *Schriftumskammer* decided that he was nonproductive to the Reich and had better join in the literary movement of the country if he wanted to stay alive. He had been assigned to write a movie scenario. When he was finished with his work the *Schriftumskammer* had decided to send him to the Eastern front as a buck private. And so poet Peter had become a member of the Wehrmacht. He hadn't thought about anything, he said, except that he hoped to fall into the arms of the first Allied soldier he encountered. Before long he was captured by the Russians.

In the prison camp he wrote poetry again and listened to the

men talk and decided that they really didn't know much about what was going on. Singlehandedly he established a propaganda outfit in his camp. He began to write different verses—verses about what the Fuehrer was doing to the German soldiers, verses about the collapse of Germany, verses about rebellion. At first there was no response. He was a traitor, and if it hadn't been for the Russians, who liked what Peter was doing, he might have been hanged or shot by his erstwhile comrades, as had been many an anti-Nazi prisoner of war in Russia, England, and America.

One day he was ordered to a different camp where there were more people like him. He was assigned to a theater which was putting on propaganda shows for Nazi soldiers. He didn't know at the time who the leaders were, or what was happening outside. Gradually he learned that there was a committee in Moscow—a Committee for a Free Germany, headed by a group of ex-prisoners of war and former German Communists who had been in Moscow ever since Hitler's ascension to power. When the shooting was over he was called to Moscow and asked whether he would like to return to Berlin and take over an important post at the Berlin radio. He agreed. Technically he was still a prisoner of war and he would be one until the peace treaty was signed, because he had never been formally released. He was living freely in Berlin, though, so long as he did the job assigned him.

We were sitting in a corner of his flat. It was unheated as all German flats were, and there were no refreshments offered. I knew Peter lived better than the average German because he had a Number One ration card which, nevertheless, entitled him to no more than a single square meal a day. There was no coffee, no sugar, no milk, no butter, no cigarettes except the ones friends brought. His wife, a slight dark girl with nervous fingers, had fainted a few minutes earlier after taking a sip of

the Nescafé I had brought. She was all right now and they were all joking about the incident.

Then Peter and Albert began to talk, naturally, about the past fourteen years. They had seen each other many times since Albert's return, but, as Peter explained to me apologetically, "We have miles and miles to cover."

"I still cannot understand," Albert was saying, "why there was never any sign in the last few years from all of you."

Peter shrugged his shoulders. "There weren't so many of us, my dear friend. Most compromised too early. There was no hope. It seemed useless to fight it. We were not organized and you know what the propaganda was like. I swear that most of my own family believed that once the Russians or the Americans got into Germany they would all be killed. After all, President Roosevelt said it was going to be an unconditional surrender."

Albert chopped the air with his hands again, opened his mouth as if to say something violent, and fell into a moody silence. Peter began to twist his fingers "Ja, ja, my friend, I know it must baffle you, but it was so."

I shared Albert's feeling. It had been going on like this for the past half hour—strange confused statements from Peter mixing his excuses for no underground activity whatsoever with attempted explanations about the hopelessness of the situation, and then in the very same breath the confession that he, too, had like the others learned to fear the Allies. It was obvious that he was not even aware of how ridiculous he sounded. He meant well, but succeeded only in establishing an uneasy atmosphere in the room.

His wife nodded. "There was nothing we could do. After a while we didn't know what was true and what was untrue. You formed in line, got your bread, and were happy if you could sleep without bombs."

"But that was in later years, during the war I cannot under-

stand it," Albert exclaimed "What about the years from 1933 to 1939, what about the 'good years' between 1939 and 1942, was it impossible to think then?"

Peter looked up at Albert and tried to calm him down. "Albert, you know that there was contact with us between 1933 and 1937. We did send people out to Switzerland, we did help many like you to get away, we helped the Jews, we saved their property. We didn't organize at the time because we didn't think the outside world would let it last. When Munich came most people like me hoped that would be the end, but after that there was no more hope for Germany's liberation"

What troubled me was that he seemed to be fishing around to find some way to justify the resignation of the Germans to the whole thing. I tried to remember the resigned attitude of the people in 1936 in Hamburg, but I couldn't 'They had never talked of a liberation from without. Indeed, they had hung out their swastikas willingly. And as for Peter himself, admittedly he hadn't liked the whole thing, but I couldn't get it out of my mind that he had found it possible to live with it and write inconsequential poetry from 1933 until 1942, hoping that an outside force would liberate him

"Peter, how did you react to the concentration camps? I don't mean the ones in the beginning for Jews, Communists, and anti-Nazis, but the extermination camps, the camps which are beyond the imagination of a human being?" I asked

His wife looked up at me "But we didn't know about them. None of the people knew about them"

Albert jumped up. "*Mensch!* We had copies of the *Brown Book* smuggled into Germany, with excerpts describing lamps made out of human skin"

Peter nodded. "Ja, ja. We knew a little bit, but of course not the whole truth. And as you say, those things are beyond imagination, and one just didn't believe them"

"Do they believe it now?"

Peter shook his head. "Most certainly not. They haven't learned a thing. The main job which was assigned to us—imposing the sense of guilt on the German people—has failed. They don't feel guilty. It is impossible to make them understand. All they know now is that they are hungry, cold, homeless, because they lost the war."

His wife picked up. "I hear it all the time where I work. The girls talk about how the Allies are stealing everything from Germany. I think our people are too hungry to learn democracy. They're joking about it all the time. You hear them on the subways and on the streetcars."

"You can't blame them in a way. It is such a mess. When you think of the four zones and everybody doing something else and everybody issuing a different decree, and a different type of denazification law and a different school reform, and supporting different political parties. All they can do is chuckle and make fun of the occupier. The Goebbels propaganda is not dead by any means. Today I was walking down Schluettersasse and I heard a man tell a girl in all seriousness that the defeat of Germany was the betrayal of the generals. 'Hitler,' he told her, 'had the secret of the atom bomb but the generals got it and sold it to the Americans.'"

At this point there arrived a friend of theirs Wolfgang, a young drama critic on the overt Russian German-language daily, *Die Tagliche Rundschau*. He was a handsome young boy with darting black eyes and a continuous smile. He was apparently very brilliant. His theater reviews were very good indeed, and he was at work on an exhaustive study of Nazism. I had met him before and was never sure how to feel toward him. He was now an enthusiastic young Communist. There was all the naïveté of a fresh convert in him. He quoted Marx and Engels and Lenin at every opportunity, and talked about the masses and progress with disarming enthusiasm. It was difficult not to believe in his sincerity. And yet, two years ago he had

been flying a Junker 88. His conversion, he told me, had begun many years ago—the day Germany was liberated he knew where he stood.

He had lately been the talk of the town because Kate Dorsch, the well-known German actress, had slapped him publicly for his acid criticism of her performance in *Family Portrait*. Wolfgang lived rather well for a German. He had the good ration, about 1600 calories, extra cigarettes and coffee because of his job. His flat was in the American sector and was decently furnished, although it was unheated. With the typical zeal of a fresh convert, he had decorated his bathroom with countless anti-Hitler slogans and excerpts from Goebbels' and Goering's speeches. He conducted his American and French visitors through it every time they came to have an evening of "important talk," as he called it. I knew of one young American, a heavy-set girl with sophisticated black-rimmed glasses, who under Wolfgang's tutelage had also freshly discovered the existence of the masses. She had some trouble with him, however, because one evening I saw him caress her straight black hair and complain "My dear, there is still so much of the bourgeoisie in you." To which she replied with a pout "I simply cannot be extreme in everything, Wolfgang. There are some things with which you must compromise, too."

Wolfgang burst into our conversation now with characteristic liveliness. "You're all such defeatists. You're old, my friends." He slapped Peter on the shoulder and kissed him on both cheeks. Then he walked over and shook Albert's hand warmly. There was respect in his eyes. Albert's name was one he had acquainted himself with in his recent indoctrination. He was one of the few German heroes to him now. "Why be so blue, Peter? Look at him." He pointed to Albert. "He returned because he knows there is hope. And we need men like him in our new Germany. Others will come back and there will be a democratic state here yet." He sat down, passed around a package of American ciga-

rettes. I guessed they were a gift from his American admirer.

"Well, my friend, when are you joining us in our work?" He turned to Albert.

Albert smiled "I am still getting reacquainted. It is not so easy to see one's way here these days."

"I was telling him that he should take over the *Aufbau Verlag*; they certainly need an editor," Peter was saying.

The *Aufbau Verlag* was the largest publishing house in the Soviet sector of Berlin, it was under the direct supervision of the *Kulturbund* for the Democratic Revival of Germany—an organization of writers, artists, and actors headed by the famous Communist poet, Johannes R. Becher, who had spent the war in Moscow.

"The *Kulturbund* is doing a splendid job, Albert, and you must join soon. We're really getting work done now. The *Aufbau Verlag* is printing large editions of important works and I consider it one of the most vital parts of the re-education program," Wolfgang continued earnestly.

I was interested in the activities of the *Aufbau Verlag* because my job in Germany was to make a survey of the publications program in the American zone. "What has the *Aufbau Verlag* published recently?" I asked.

Peter replied carefully, "Of course we had over a million copies of *Stalingrad* printed." It was a book by Theodore Plivier, the man who had written an exposé on the German generals in the late twenties, called *The Kaiser Left but the Generals Remained*. His *Stalingrad* was indeed an excellent document. It was the story of what actually happened to the German soldiers and to the minds of the German officers during the worst debacle of the war, told by a man who had been there as a member of a death battalion. Peter quoted some other books which I hadn't heard about and then he startled me by saying that they were now planning to put out new novels by Hans Fallada and Gerhardt Hauptmann.

"Fallada? But wasn't he a Nazi?" I asked in surprise.

Albert nodded his head and Peter smiled. "Yes, he was. But he is now a protégé of Becher's. His books are being published and so are those of Hauptmann who just before his death sent a message of congratulations to the *Kulturbund*."

Again the confusion. Six months earlier in Stockholm I had listened to writers from formerly occupied countries declare vehemently at a meeting of the International Pen Club that they wished to draw up a blacklist of all writers who had ever collaborated with the Nazis. For, they said, they could never face the possibility of having to sit with such writers and exchange ideas with them in any meeting. Last year I had spoken to Ingrid in Norway who could probably never again sing on the stage in her country because she had made a friend of a Nazi. But here in Berlin, people like Albert, Friedrich Wolf (the author of *Professor Mamlock*), and others who had scars of concentration camps or had been exiles, were asked to join hands with the Falladas and Hauptmanns in the job of re-educating the German people.

Albert and I were walking home in the darkness. The cold was bitter. The hard snow crunched under our feet. There were hardly any lights, most of the buildings around us were shells.

"It's pretty hopeless, Edith." He spoke quietly. "I am so afraid that it is a repetition of the late twenties and perhaps worse. What hurts most is the intellectuals. You heard Peter. He's so confused."

"What about the others? Like Friedrich Wolf and Weinert and Becher?" I asked.

He was silent for a moment. "Everybody is dissatisfied, yet nobody speaks out. All controversial subjects are avoided. They write their banal poetry and quote Goethe. As if it were a sin to talk about education. They have to write inconsequential things in order to maintain their independence. There really is

no intellectual life in Germany. Wolf keeps warning me to maintain my independence, and you know I want to, but I am realizing fast that it is impossible to be an individual in Germany today if you want to express yourself. You have to be neutral, not think one way or another. You know what my dream was. Maybe it was too big." He stopped and again chopped the cold air with his two palms "I still want to do it. I want to have a magazine in which I will write what I think and to which writers from all zones and different parts of the world will contribute. I want to call it *The Bridge* I refuse to be in the pay of either the Russians or the Americans. It is a vicious circle. If I were licensed by the Americans in Bremen (which I wouldn't be because of my background), most of my other friends in the Soviet zone wouldn't speak to me. If I write for the *Aufbau* or the *Tagliche Rundschau* I am immediately branded a Communist and cannot contribute to the American-licensed press. They begin to fight for you. The Russians offer better rations and better pay, the Americans are people I know. I don't want any of it. I don't want to work for the *Neue Zeitung* in Munich, where I know that every editorial does nothing but sling dirt at the Russians, and I don't want to work with Falladas and Hauptmanns in the *Kulturbund*. This is not going to help in the re-education of Germany."

I knew how right Albert was. Every morning when I read the German press I couldn't help but see hundreds of Germans smiling gleefully at the campaigns which the papers of each zone conducted against each other. "These are the victorious friendly allies," they were probably murmuring to each other.

"What are you doing now, Albert? Have you had any luck with the magazine idea?" I asked.

"I went to see General McClure and he was interested. He was naturally cautious because of my premature anti-fascist background. But he said if the Russians agreed he would be willing to listen. Yesterday I went out to see the Soviet colonel

in charge of information control. He was very interested and indicated that he would co-operate. But I am having trouble with my old friends, the German Communists. You heard about what the *Kulturbund* is doing."

"Is it part of the Soviet cynicism?" I asked, remembering the Tass man in Finland who had said he didn't care how many fascists there were around as long as they paid reparations. "Are they just using every writer they can to write the kind of stuff they want, no matter what his background?"

Albert shook his head. "It's more than that. I suppose I shouldn't talk about it but I had a real fight with Becher the other day. I will say quite openly to you that he left for Moscow a revolutionary and returned a German nationalist of the worst kind. He doesn't care one bit about a new healthy German culture. He wants to hang on to the old names. He is inspiring the people with the glory of Goethe. He coddles Falladas and Hauptmanns. Here is a man who controls the literary life of Germany. But he is so completely lost in building a Becher Empire and in flogging the dead horse by looking out the window and screaming 'the entire people is guilty' that he forgets his responsibilities. He is now starting a magazine with Carossa, a famous fascist. I just don't understand. On the other hand, he doesn't trust me because I am too friendly with the Americans. Did you say you found the Germans lived on the fringes? Well, it seems that I live on the fringes of the fringes." He stopped and we continued walking in silence.

It seemed to me that Albert was a symbol of Germany today. Perhaps even the symbol of Europe. He too was suspended in limbo. The tug of war that went on constantly between the big powers had to a great extent paralyzed the reconstruction of the Continent. Similarly the struggle between the zones in Germany tied the hands of a man like Albert who was perhaps better fitted than most others to participate in the re-education of Germans. What he wanted was simple and good—to be able

to act independently and positively on the basis of a progressive and democratic point of view formed during years of fighting the very thing which had made Europe what it was today.

I was packing my bag for a trip through the American zone. Frau Kaiser, talking incessantly as usual, bustled around the apartment collecting items that she thought would be necessary for my journey. "They have finally dropped ration five, thank God." She was referring to the lowest ration card which yielded less than six hundred calories a day and was meant for all who didn't work. The lowest card now was four, which wasn't very much better. "I don't know what I'd do if I didn't work here. The people in Neukoeln where I live are really starving now. There are no potatoes to be gotten, and in this cold you get so hungry, and with the *Strom Sperre* and no candles you go from house to house over there and see that people can't work even if they want to, they're so hungry and cold and unhappy I don't know how we'll last through this winter"

Again, as in Frankfurt and on many occasions since, pity took hold of me. Most people I saw lived under circumstances that no human being could condone. It seemed to me that all dignity had gone out of men. Most of them looked like the skeletons of their homes, ugly, begging, scraping, picking things up, and shivering. I cleaned out my cupboard and gave all the coffee and sugar and chocolates to Mrs Kaiser. She thanked me profusely and sighed again. I prepared a second package for Willie Schmidt whom I'd been giving cigarettes and other staples all along.

She looked at me in surprise. "Didn't you know about Willie, Gn Frau?"

"No. What happened to him?"

"He was dismissed and arrested. He was a PG [member of the Nazi party]. He falsified his *Fragebogen* to get a job with

the Americans." She looked at me for a moment to see what effect it would have and then went on. "I always knew it—the way he clicked his heels. And did you notice his mustache? It was the kind that most of them wore, it was just like Hitler's, but lately he'd let it grow out a bit to the sides I could tell he was a Nazi by the way he spoke to us. You know how they treated women. . . ."

I felt sorry for Frau Kaiser, for suddenly I didn't trust her either. I think she understood it. Her face was redder than ever and she talked even more heatedly than usual.

On my tour of our zone I found a constant repetition of the contrast between those who lived and those who merely existed, and I found myself again and again caught between pity and distrust.

In Frankfurt the swift pity that flowed for a child whose eyes looked hungry struggled with disgust at a woman who told me how she had "hated the Nazis," but a few moments later nonchalantly described the several joyous weeks she had spent at Marienbad in Czechoslovakia in 1942—at the time when just a few hundred miles away Ludmila Maslakova of Lidice was being deported to Ravensbrueck. In Bad Nauheim the respect I had had for an old man who told how he had refused to divorce his Jewish wife and had gone into hiding with her alternated with anger at a youth who described the ruins of Germany and whispered under his breath "*Das ist die Rache des Welt Judentums*" (This is the revenge of world Jewry). In Heidelberg the sympathy aroused by a newspaper editor when he began his conversation with "We are learning from our mistakes the hard way" was converted to distrust when he wound up by saying, "The war might not have been lost but for stupid blunders."

City after city lay in ruins. Streetcars tottered down the main street of Stuttgart bulging here more dangerously than any-

where in Europe. One afternoon I watched an old man chase a streetcar, leap to catch the pole at the door, miss his footing on the steps, and drag along the street until with a final effort he flung himself free and barely missed a pylon which might have crushed his head. I don't know why, but I think I felt sorrier for that man then because he was a German. It was like feeling sorry for a child who had been rightly spanked and then punished again. My driver murmured in Schwabisch, "Na, na, a man does not have enough not having food, not having clothes, not having coals, he must jump on streetcars, na, na."

In every city people walked about in the cold with the eternal rucksack strapped to their backs so that they could carry home whatever coal or wood or other valuable items they might find on the way. The same jokes were repeated again and again about *der Ami* and *der Russe* and the black market. One of the standard ones was of Peter meeting Willie on the street, both of them carrying their rucksacks, and Willie asking Peter, "What are you doing now, do you have a job?" "A job," said Peter, "don't be silly. I have a family to support. . . . I have no time for a job. . . ."

In Frankfurt I heard someone whistle the Horst Wessel song and listened to make sure as he began to sing in the dark. It was the Nazi tune indeed, but the words had been changed. Instead of

High the flag
Comrades march on step by step
Comrades who were killed by the redfront
Are marching in spirit too

the words went:

High the prices
The zones tightly closed
The calories sink step by step

- The same *Volksgenossen* are still starving
The others are starving too
But only in spirit. . . .

I was later to hear it throughout the zone, hummed and sung by youngsters. It reflected, perhaps better than anything else, the popular state of mind of the Germans.

I spoke to dozens of editors of magazines and book publishing houses hoping that they at least might have some ideas and perhaps a positive approach, but most of them were engrossed in either self pity or opportunistic efforts to cash in on the demand for any kind of reading matter, or else they seemed to be trying to sit out this period of confusion by publishing as little as they possibly could. Many of them escaped the problems of the present by turning to the past. They published dozens of editions of Goethe and other classics although these had never been missing from Germany. There seemed to be a new cult for Goethe throughout the country—either the German was honestly turning to his master for guidance or he was subtly re-expressing his old nationalism. Whatever the case, the resurgence of this type of romanticism in the German was dangerous because it had always been the first sign of aggression.

In Wiesbaden, I visited some of the world's finest publishers, the group of famous Leipzig publishers who had escaped to the American zone prior to the Russian occupation of their city. Now several of them were lodged with their offices in the broken-down Pariser Hof Hotel in a devastated section of Wiesbaden. They had crammed their desks in among wash basins and kitchen sinks. They had published nothing since the occupation. When I asked the editor of the *Insel Verlag* why, he smiled wryly and talked of paper shortages and pointed to a volume of Goethe which they were preparing to issue. It was going to be a de luxe edition.

"Don't you think it's the job of a German publisher today

to publish some works of people who were not allowed in the Reich to show the Germans what the outside world thinks?"

"Whom would you suggest? Isn't Goethe democratic enough?" I felt his sarcasm and I was beginning to get impatient. But I continued the conversation

"How about some American or English authors?" I asked.

He smiled again, this time sweetly, and shrugged his shoulders "Gn. Frau, we are the *Insel Verlag*. We publish the finest literature in the world. Could you give us another Rilke?" I was exasperated and left.

Hans Schenke in Stuttgart edited an economic weekly, which, he declared, was to be the new *Frankfurter Zeitung*. As a matter of fact, he had said, many of the former editors of that famous paper worked on his periodical. He talked at length about the necessity of re-education and the economic recovery of Germany. He deplored the many political parties, the four zonal divisions, the lack of economic unity, and all the obvious evils of occupation. When I asked him what he thought the solution was he smiled and shined his fingernails on the lapel of his coat. "There is one hope for Europe and that is a federation. Mr. Churchill has the answer. We must have a strong federation of Western Europe, a single economic unit. That's the only way to beat the Communist danger."

There was a slight change since 1945 in his language, I noticed. I imagined that a year earlier he would have said "Bolshevist menace" instead of "Communist danger." Otherwise nothing had changed in his thinking. I was fascinated by his frankness in front of an American and continued.

"Do you think that the German people are well on their way to peace, or are Nazi ideologies still rampant?"

"It is impossible to judge under these conditions. When the British and Americans first entered, the entire German nation was going to co-operate. They treated them as liberators. But

the Americans came as occupiers. After all, you see for yourselves how our people suffer"

"Did the people of Stuttgart really welcome the French as liberators when they first entered?" I asked "I know that some of the cities the American armies took had to be fought for house by house, and the defendants were not the Wehrmacht but German civilians, the Volksturm, women and even children. Did you ever hear of the battle for Aachen?"

"No " He didn't blush His face remained as immobile as it had been throughout the conversation. "What happened there?"

There was no use my explaining. There was nothing in this man's thinking that I could change, and nothing in mine that he was willing to understand. And he was another who was supposed to educate the new German mind.

In Munich the thermometer reached bottom. Thick snow lay over the fantastic ruins of ancient buildings. The two pillars which had once supported the "eternal flames" commemorating the birth of Nazism had recently been blown up and lay now in a heap of crumbled stones The opera, the museum, the palace were destroyed. Sharp winds whistled through hollow buildings Here, as in every other German city, the center was wiped out and the people lived at the edges, crowded into half-destroyed buildings sometimes six or seven to a room

In Munich I learned about the deep bitterness that the city people felt toward the farmer who refused to sell food to the town and kept it only for black-marketeering Even American MP's had difficulty forcing the farmers to give up their quotas Here too the Bavarians hated the rest of Germany. Perhaps because Nazism had made its debut here, now every Bavarian talked of how bitterly he had always opposed the regime, and how the first open revolt against Hitler had started right here at the University of Munich when the Schulz brothers were hanged for underground activity in 1943 Here American con-

trol officers complained continuously that they had little control because all things were under the direction of the Catholic church which ruled with an iron hand with the full support of the highest military officers. Though there was constant wrangling to obtain paper for important educational publications, in Bavaria 60 per cent of the available paper was allotted to church catechisms.

I visited Dr. Z. at his small house outside of Munich. He had been a rare book dealer and librarian before the war. Now he was working for military government as a post-publication censor and reader. He was a kindly middle-aged man, very cultured and very polite. He didn't complain of the lack of food or his cold house. He seemed to understand that these things were inevitable. But he did complain about how difficult his work was and I saw that he was sincere.

"It is difficult to try to remake a mind which has been told for years and years that it is superior to all other minds. Even Germans who doubted that at first because it was too big a statement came to believe it after a while because it was pleasant to believe and because they saw Germany rolling up victory after victory all over Europe. We all knew that our culture was great and sometimes we leaned on it as a kind of proof that what we were doing could not possibly be as bad as our enemies tried to paint it."

"How are you combating it now?" I asked. "Do you think that any progress has been made in the re-education program?"

He shook his head. "Here in Bavaria it is doubly difficult because of the Catholic Church. It has a fantastic hold on the people, and you know how reactionary it is." He paused for a moment. "You know, I would say that the Catholic influence here is probably as strong as the influence of the Jews in America."

I raised my eyebrows. He continued talking. After a moment

I said casually, "How strong do you think the Jewish influence is in America?"

"I really don't know, but I gather it is rather strong. After all, there are the big families like the Morgenthau, and we all know the Morgenthau plan. We've heard how influential they are in the government, and most of the bankers on Wall Street are Jewish." He spoke calmly and there was no malice in his voice. I knew he did not realize that as a matter of fact there were very few Jewish bankers on Wall Street and very few influential Jews in the American government. He had unwittingly drunk in the propaganda of fourteen years, and truth and untruth had become mixed up.

He went on to talk about the lack of authors in Germany and the futility of trying to get writers to publish works that would contribute directly to the re-education program. During the conversation the name of Thomas Mann came up and he was rather bitter at the latter's refusal to return to Germany. I told him that to be frank I could not blame Thomas Mann for not wishing to return after all that had happened. He was silent for a moment and then smiled.

"You are a great partisan of Thomas Mann's, aren't you?"

I nodded.

"I have something that might interest you. I haven't any particular use for it. You may remember that the Nazis held a public auction at Mann's home here in Munich to get rid of his belongings. I went down to see if I could get a sewing machine for my wife. There wasn't one, but I did pick up a basket of miscellaneous things, and among them was the name plate from Mann's gate. Would you like to have it?"

There was nothing to say. Obviously his thinking was thoroughly twisted. He had called himself an anti-Nazi, he had told me that he had helped a Jewish family get their belongings out of Munich, his conscience seemed to be at peace. Yet it had never occurred to him to question the morality of his

desire to buy the sewing machine, thereby lending support to the Nazi desecration. He for one would never be able to understand what Thomas Mann had meant when he said that he would be embarrassed if he ever had to return to Germany again.

A few days later, just before I was to leave Munich, a package was delivered to me at my hotel containing the Mann name plate together with a small card from Dr. Z. It read: "Thank you for a most pleasant visit. We are always so glad to meet someone who understands our problem."

The name plate is now in the hands of someone else who understands the German problem—the original owner.

Back in Berlin there was no change. There was a new Feuermann who took his orders respectfully and carried them out precisely. When I asked him to heat the flat he did so until it was unbearably hot and when I asked him to please turn it down he complied until it became unbearably cold. I tried to explain that I wanted a comfortable mean, he listened politely and repeated his mistakes. I wondered if some day soon he wouldn't be going the way of Willie Schmidt.

One evening I went to visit Mrs. Hartmann whom I had known as an acquaintance of my mother's before the war. I had had no time to look her up earlier. She still lived in the same building on Steinplatz, now in the British sector. I remembered the elegance of the apartment the magnificent busts and figurines, the antique bas-reliefs and religious carvings. Mr. Hartmann had been in the diplomatic service in the Weimar Republic, and I knew that he had disappeared toward the end of the war. It wasn't quite clear to me what the family had done during the Nazi regime ,

All the precious belongings, the art objects, the comfortable furniture, and some bookcases with heavy leather-bound volumes had been crowded into a back room of the Hartmann

apartment. The front half had been badly damaged by bombing. An old butler with a wing collar conducted me down a long cold passage to this back room in which I found not only Mrs. Hattmann but several other people, mostly young men and women. Immediately I recognized the old days when Mrs. Hattmann had used to collect young sculptors and poets and musicians and bring them together at her house where she served them good coffee and sandwiches and fine brandy in return for their stimulating talk.

She hadn't changed very much, it seemed to me. Her face was slightly drawn, but she had make-up on, and her dress was of a new cut. She sat beside a small stove, with a crimson shawl across her shoulders, in her lap rested a Pekingese dog. Without rising she put out a hand and welcomed me with an expression of restricted sorrow. Then she left me to mingle with the group while she turned her attention back to a young man with short hair who kept his eyes on the floor and talked softly. "You're wrong, Angela, the cynicism of our youth is gone. We've had a fill of it, and it is hard to live without it. I don't know who is going to be able to create in Berlin again."

I introduced myself to a young man and girl who were standing in a corner and found myself immediately plunged into a discussion of modern sculpture. It was the girl who did most of the talking, while the young man, who was apparently the sculptor, nodded his head and shifted his eyes from me to the girl to the floor. She was saying that only art works were meaningful today and he of all people should understand that. He nodded his head again. But when he spoke it was to say that he did not agree with her, that art was no good if you had nothing to say, and that things were so mixed up he didn't know what there was to say and was ready to give up.

The butler passed around a tray of small glasses filled with some kind of liquor. As I lifted a glass a woman in her early thirties touched my shoulder and drew me to a couch "Angela

tells me that you are also a Russian." I smiled. But before I could make a definite reply she lapsed into rapid Russian and insisted that she must have known my family in Berlin or some other capital of Europe. She insisted upon asking questions about them to see if she couldn't trace them down, and finally she was sure she knew one of my uncles, although her description of him was completely at variance with the facts. Nevertheless this cheered her a great deal, for, she complained, there were so few Russians left in Berlin that she felt alone in the world. I didn't think it wise at this particular point to remind her that there were probably more Russians in Berlin today than there had ever been before in the German capital.

"You know how everyone was spirited off," she said, raising her hands in a sign of horror. "Out of the colony there is nobody left. I was almost kidnapped three times. I don't live in the same place more than a day." As she spoke she shook her head and the shiny brown braids on her head bounced. She leaned over closely and whispered, "Poor Angela's husband—they took him away right after the occupation. He is somewhere in Prussia. You know he was never a Nazi."

She rambled on with more tales of the Russian colony mentioning names completely unfamiliar to me but which she was convinced I knew well. This was a type I had known, not only in Berlin but in almost every other capital that I had visited before the war.

But the others in the room were Berlin, the sculptor and the zealous girl urging him to his art, two young boys sitting with their heads together in a corner talking softly, I guessed, about poetry or music. They had thin sensitive faces and long fingers and occasionally they looked at each other with soft eyes. Everyone in the room was well dressed. Angela rose and came toward me and then the girl who had been talking to the sculptor joined us.

"You would not know Berlin, my dear, would you?" Mrs. Hartmann said.

The girl and the Russian woman shook their heads sadly for me.

"It is inconceivable how difficult it is here," the girl put in.

"You have no idea," the Russian woman said to me, putting her arm around me.

"It is too much," the girl went on. "The world has never seen destruction like this"

Angela simply nodded her head and made a tragic face.

I felt a sudden disgust. "Warsaw is worse," I quietly replied.

"No, it is not possible," said the Russian.

"I am afraid it is. And there is one section of the city in which even the ruins were purposely burned while the people were in them," I continued

My words seemed to have no effect. Angela let her dog down and folded her hands in her lap. "Yes, my dear. I know that all of Europe is in a bad state, and it is the fault of the Nazis. But others at least have some hope. They have the sympathy of the whole world including those of us who suffered here so long." She lifted her head and spoke the words with what I felt was a conscious attempt at drama. "We in Germany have nothing left but our misery." I looked at her well-cut dress and her well-manicured hands and the powder and lipstick on her face.

The old butler came into the room and with an air of mysterious excitement leaned to whisper in Mrs. Hartmann's ear. An expression of extreme consternation spread over her face and she stood up.

"Now it's happened again." She hurried toward the door and then turned to me. "Come, have a look." I followed her and so did most of the others in the room. At the end of the corridor two old ladies and the butler were working furiously to mop up a large pool of water. As we came up, the butler threw open the door of a room and turned on a light. Furniture of all kinds,

statuettes, suitcases, trunks, and bookcases were piled halfway to the ceiling and from the ceiling came a trickle of water splashing among the objects in the room.

"This is the third time this week that those pipes have burst," Angela said to me. Then she turned away, closed the door, and ushered us back to the sitting room. "Now you see, my dear," she said with an all-enduring smile. "You see what we go through here."

When I left later the butler in his wing collar and the two old ladies were still down on their hands and knees in the corridor trying to mop up the puddle which was getting bigger and bigger. I was sure that before morning it would turn to ice.

I took a plane from Berlin to England where I was to catch the *SS America* homeward bound. We circled slowly over Berlin to gain altitude, and as the plane banked I looked down at a city which seemed to have no roofs. As we flew west and then north over the Ruhr, I could see even in the February snow the sprawling scars which heavy battles had left on the land.

I did not know how to sum up my feelings. I was more confused about Germany and the German people than ever. This time, however, it was not a confusion of pity with anger, for I must confess that as soon as I entered the plane I was able to forget the German people as individuals and could think only of the mass German mind and of Germany itself as a part of the postwar problem. What I had seen was an open running sore in the middle of a sick continent. If the rest of Europe was in limbo, Germany was in hell.

Who was going to supply the answer? I remembered the Dutch who had wanted Germany quickly rebuilt so that they could re-establish their prewar trade. And I remembered the Czechs who were shifting their entire economy so they would no longer have to be dependent on a dangerous Germany. I had

talked to economists and political advisers at OMGUS. Official policy was to put as many things as possible into German hands as soon as possible. The first reason given was that this was the only way to teach the Germans democracy, and the second, that it was to save the American taxpayer money. It was obvious, however, that the Germans were not yet ready to be given democracy. Democracy was not a thing you could give away. Yes, we were denazifying, yes, we were bringing in food, yes, we were telling the farmer to produce. It was meaningless. And whatever the Russians were doing, or the British, was also meaningless.

For nothing was clearer than the simple fact that there was no solution for Germany until there was a solution of the overall Russian-American problem. Nowhere was it clearer than in the four-sector city of Berlin that the world was divided against itself. There were meetings of the *Kommandatura* and many discussions, but each returned to his sector and did as he saw fit. In this broken land the Allies who had joined to defeat the Germans were already using them against each other. No one was enjoying that more than the German himself. I couldn't help feeling that it was this one fact which made the German's hunger, cold, and defeat easier to bear. And this was the reason why it was hopeless to expect the German mind to be converted.

Perhaps Albert and his problem were even more symbolic than I had at first thought. If the tight vise of zonal occupation could be relaxed to give him some elbow room, perhaps there would be a chance. For that matter, if the great power vise which seemed to squeeze all of Europe were relaxed on both sides, perhaps the Continent could begin to breathe.

Westward Crossing

THE S.S. AMERICA WAS shiny and clean. She was a luxury liner. The menu filled an enormous card. At the table next to mine two Englishmen and two Czechs started at the top and carefully worked their way down until they could eat no more. They did it at every meal that first day. They were not at their table the next morning. Later, at lunch, one of them leaned over to me, smiled weakly, and said, "We knew this was going to make us sick, but we wanted to do it anyhow."

On the third day at sea the whistles blew a loud salute. In the distance the *Queen Elizabeth* passed on her way to England. Her hull glistened in the sun. I knew that she had been converted at last for peace. I wished I could have said the same for the continent toward which she was sailing.

